

THE
EVERLASTING LOVE
AND
DELIGHTS
OF
JESUS CHRIST
WITH THE
SONS of MEN,
Represented in Six
SERMONS
ON

Prov. viii. 30, 31.

By *WILLIAM NOTCUTT*.

L O N D O N :

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SERMONS

Preached in six

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By WILLIAM NOTCUTT

LONDON

Printed for J. O'WARD, at the Bible and Church
in the Strand, near Blackfriars.

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Thoughts and Affections could bear
some Proportion to this sublime Subject,
and many others, with us, draw Water
Well is deep, and we need the Bucket
and Line of Faith, that with Joy we
may draw living Water from the
WILLIAM GOWARD, Esq;

SIR,
 **H**O'every Portion of the Word
of God is good, and worthy
to be highly prized for itself,
and for the Sake of its Au-
thor; even above thousands of Gold and
Silver; and more than our necessary
Food; yet there are some Parts of it,
more excellent than others; and those
are to be esteem'd so, that directly treat
of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is the
Top and most precious Jewel in all the
Crown of the Gospel. And the special
Love of *Jesus Christ* is more to us than
all the other Glories of *Christ*: For
what would his Greatness and Holiness
be, but a Terror to fallen Man, were
it not for his infinite, unchangeable and
free Love? The Text, handled in the
following Pages, carries our Thoughts

up to the Fountain-Head; the everlast-
ing Love and Delight of Jesus Christ
with the Sons of Men. O that our
Thoughts and Affections could bear
some Proportion to this sublime Subject,
and many others, with us, draw Water
out of this Well of Salvation! But the
Well is deep, and we need the Bucket
and Line of Faith, that with Joy we
may draw living Water from this ever-
lasting Spring. May we never want the
Assistance of the Spirit of Adoption, to
help us to make out our own Interest
in this everlasting Love, by the genuine
Fruits of it, Effectual-Calling; Faith,
Repentance and Holiness; that we
might hear the great Lover of Men say,
to each of our Souls, *I have loved thee
with an everlasting Love; therefore with
Loving-Kindness have I drawn thee.* If
our Souls consent to his Terms of Sal-
vation, then we have been drawn with his
Cords of Love; and if we are drawn,
by the Power and Grace of God, to
close with Jesus Christ; then we may
conclude, that we are some of the happy
Souls, that were loved with everlasting
Love; and may assure ourselves, that
the same Love and Grace of God, will
bring

DEDICATION.

bring us to Glory, thro' all the Difficulties of the present Life: For, as his eternal Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure; and the Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance; Then, whom he loved from everlasting, he will love to everlasting. Who, or what shall separate us from the Love of Christ. That which gave the Apostle Paul full Persuasion of the Unchangeableness of the Love of Christ; may assure us also, of the Perpetuity of the same Grace. I am persuaded that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Those that have now receiv'd the Things that accompany Salvation, shall receive the Salvation itself, in due Time. Being confident of this very Thing; that he, who hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it to the Day of Christ. With his preventing Love, he came over the Mountains and Hills of our Corruptions and Unworthiness, to bring his Grace into our Hearts; and having taken Possession

session of the Throne, *Sin shall no more have Dominion over us.* And tho' Sin may cloud our Evidence of the Love of Christ to us; yet Sin *shall not separate from the Love itself*; for tho' we do enough, every Day, to provoke him to withdraw his Love from us; yet *many Waters cannot quench, nor the Floods drown it.* O happy Souls, that are interested in this eternal and unchangeable Love, and can also make it out! *By these Things Men live, and this is the Life of my Spirit*; said one of the best of the Kings of Judah; and I am persuaded that you, dear and honoured Sir, have the Experience and Witness of the same, in your own Soul. You know that it is not the Love of Christ, as it is unchangeable, or as it is everlasting, that can be to any Man, just Matter of Comfort; but the Experience of the *genuine Fruits* of it upon the Soul; then may the Receiver look backward and forward, and behold both the *Foundation* and the *Head-Stone with shouting, crying, Grace, Grace to it.* Dear Sir, I would not falsely accuse the Providence of God; but the great Disposer of all knows, that I have nothing to bring towards the building of the Tabernacle; except

DEDICATION. vii

except a few poor, mean Performances; but what I have, I hope I bring *with a willing Mind*. You know, Sir, that every one has not the same Kind or Measure of Gifts and Grace; the Spirit of God gives to every one severally even as he will: Some are fitted to *plant*, and others to *water* the Plants of Righteousness; I leave it to the Sovereign Pleasure of the Lord of the Vinyard, to do with me, as seemeth good to him; so that he will honour my poor weak Attempts, with his own Blessing. Tho' in the following Pages, I have attempted *acceptable Words*; that is such as I thought apt, and proper, to represent the Gospel-Mysteries by; and to endeavour to bring down the Truths of God, to the Capacities of the common Readers; I have taken no Thought, at all, about gratifying such as, too often, feed on the Chaff of enticing Words of Man's Wisdom; but I have taken Care *to please Men for their Edification*. And thus I do; because I am well assured, that the Success of our Preaching and Writing, does *not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of the Spirit of God*.

viii DEDICATION.

I Commit this Performance, such as it is, to your Patronage ; encouraged thereto, both from your Choice of this Subject for me ; and your favourable Acceptance of the former Discourses, I shall add nothing more, but to signify, that I have taken the Liberty, in the Close, to subjoin that particular Use and Application of this Subject, which the personal Wisdom of God himself had prepared to our Hands ; that is, to shew us what the Love of Christ and Grace of God constrain the true Christian unto. I was well assured that it is your settled Judgment, as well as mine ; that *Knowledge and Practice* should ever go Hand in Hand in our holy Religion ; and that sincere Souls desire to know their *Duty*, as well as to hear of their *Privileges* ; and they view the one to quicken their Souls to the other. I hope the Lord will preserve your valuable Life, to finish your noble and surprizing Designs, for the Interest of our dear Lord Jesus, and may many reap the Benefit of your Love to Christ and precious Souls ; So prays your humble obliged Servant, for Jesus Sake,

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THE
Everlasting LOVE
OF
JESUS CHRIST
TO A
Lost WORLD, &c.

PROV. VIII. 30, 31.

Then I was by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his Delight ; rejoycing always before him ; rejoycing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.

 HIS Book, of the Proverbs, was written by Solomon, the wisest of all the Kings of *Israel* ; and of all Men upon Earth. That's one Reason, why all wise Men should carefully attend to the Matter contained in it ; but there is yet another Reason why all true Christians should make it the Matter of their humble Study ; and that is,
B because

because the principal Design of the Book is to treat of one *greater than Solomon*; even of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God; for we may truly say, with Regard to the Person speaking in our Text, as our Lord Jesus Christ did, of himself, Matt. xii. 42. *A greater than Solomon is here*——This Book of Proverbs consists, principally, or for the most Part, of short Sentences, that have no manifest Dependence one upon another; but contain their intire Sense within themselves; consisting of wise Sayings, utter'd with a Design to make Men Wise and Good. But here and there you may observe a close Connection between one Verse and another; and so it is in this Chapter, where our Text lies. The Words of our Text have a manifest Dependence upon the foregoing Verses; as will be seen afterwards. This Portion of Scripture, consider'd in Connection with the Context, contains a very necessary and material Part of revealed Religion; something like that Portion of Scripture, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself*. As to the Truths contained herein, the Light of Nature is intirely silent about them. Tho' that Light does reveal to Men the Being of God, with some of his divine Perfections; so far at least, as to leave Men without Excuse, if they glorify him not as God; and it discovers some gross Acts of Sin, and admonishes of some general Duties; yet it does not discover what is brought

to

Serm. I. *Jesus Christ to a lost World.* 3

to Light thro' the Gospel. All the Light of Nature cannot shew Men either how they became sinful and miserable; or what fallen Man must do, in Order to obtain Pardon of Sin, or to escape eternal Misery; but in vain it turns Men into themselves for Relief: because it cannot preach Jesus Christ and his Undertaking and Benefits; or the Way of Conveyance of them to Men. There was, therefore, a Necessity of a divine Revelation, and God has mercifully given it to us by the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; which are the only certain and perfect Rule of Faith, Worship and Life; and the only true and infallible Standard to try all Doctrines and Spirits by; in which there is nothing contain'd, contrary to right Reason; tho' there are many great and glorious Mysteries, contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, which human, finite Reason cannot account for; these should be humbly taken up, by us, as God has laid them down, without cavilling at them, or pretending to give Reasons how they possibly can be; or why they are so: for if there are many Mysteries in Nature, which no Man, since the Creation of the World, to this Day, could ever account for; why should proud, vain Man leave things undetermin'd, that are at Home, and reject heavenly things, because he cannot subject them to his finite Reason? For all wise Men will allow, that heavenly Mysteries exceed all the Mysteries of Nature,

4 *The Everlasting Love of* Serm. I.

as far as the Heavens exceed the Earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ intimated as much to *Nicodemus*, John iii. 12. *If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?* And he instances in one of the Wonders of Nature; *the Wind bloweth where it listeth*, or where God pleaseth, *and thou hearest the Sound*, and seest the Effects, *thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth*; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

IN the Words of our Text we have these three Parts;

I. THE Person speaking; together with the Person spoken of.

(I.) THE *Person speaking*; and the Context sufficiently informs us, that it is the *personal Wisdom* of God; the Lord Jesus Christ; the eternal Son of God, consider'd as he that was to be incarnate, as an Undertaker for the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners. Under the Character of the *Messias*, the People of God waited for his appearing in the *Flesh*, thro' all the Ages of the World; from God's giving out the first Promise of him, *Gen. iii. 15.* till the Fulness of the Time when Jesus Christ was actually come; they spake of him as he that was to come, *Matt. xi. 3.* *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* This is the very Person, who, in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, is called *Wisdom*.

(2.) THE

Serm. I. *Jesus Christ to a lost World.* 5

(2.) THE Person of whom these Words are spoken, which are contain'd in our Text; and that is *God the Father* [or God, consisting of three divine Persons] imply'd in the several relative Pronouns in the Text itself, and explain'd in many other Expressions in the Context: I was by *him*; I was brought up with *him*; I was daily *his* Delight; rejoycing always before *him*. These Pronouns refer us back to some foregoing Verses, for Explication; where we have the Name of the Person refered to, Ver. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of Old.*

2. THE *Season*, whereunto all these things are to be refered; and that's imply'd in the Word *then*. Which, for Illustration-sake, I will take the Liberty to add unto each Sentence. *Then* was I by him; *then* was I brought up with him; *then* were my Delights with the Sons of Men. And that Season was from Everlasting; prov'd by an Induction of Particulars, in several Verses of the Context, which I must, afterwards, turn you to; and then the chief things, contained in our Text, will lie the plainer before us.

3. THE principal *Matter* of which our Text treats; and that's presented to us under these three Heads.

(1.) AN Assertion of the *Eternity* of our Lord Jesus Christ: I was by him; I was brought up with him; namely, with God the Father, from Everlasting; before the Hills

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and Mountains were framed; or any Creature was formed, in Heaven or Earth; like that Expression of *Moses*, Pſal. xc. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth, or the World, from Everlaſting to Everlaſting thou art God.*

(2.) THE mutual Pleaſure, Satisfaction and Delight, that God the Father and Son took, in each other, from all Eternity.

[1.] THE Delight and Satisfaction which God the Father took in his eternal Son, from Everlaſting, expreſſ'd in theſe Words, *I was daily, or continually, his Delight.* There was none from Everlaſting for God the Father to delight in, but himſelf; that is, one only living and true God; conſiſting of three divine Perſons. But this Delight of the Father in Jeſus Chriſt, ſeems eſpecially to refer to Chriſt as Mediator between God and Men; as the Redeemer of loſt Sinners; and to the perfect Diſcharge of the Work which the Father had given him to do. Which he ſpeaks of as highly pleaſing to the Father; John x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me; becauſe I lay down my Life.* As the Son of God he was loved on another Conſideration, but as Mediator, he was loved of the Father as his Elect and faithful Servant, Iſa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth.* O the wonderful Love and Grace of God the Father, that he ſhould love his
Son,

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Son, as M-diator, the more, for that he laid down his Life for the lost Sheep !

[2.] THE Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight, which Jesus Christ took, from all Eternity, in God the Father, express'd in these Words, *Rejoycing always before him.* Taking his highest Delight in the divine Perfections, and in the infinite Love and Complacency of the Father towards him.

(3.) THE Delight that Jesus Christ took in the Prospect of the Redemption and Salvation of all that the Father had given him. Express'd in these Words ; *Rejoycing in the habitable Parts of his Earth ; and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.* Not so much in the Prospect of their Being ; or of their bearing of his Image, in the first Creation ; as in their Redemption and Salvation, thro' his Obedience and Death ; his Conveyance of Grace to them ; and his bringing them to Glory, to be with him where he is, and be glorified with him. — Thus I have given you the Division of the Words, as an Introduction to some Discourses, the Matter of which shall be comprized under the three Heads now taken Notice of.

First, I shall endeavour to demonstrate, to you, *who* it is that speaks in our Text. Then was *I* by him. And for as much as our Text is but a Continuation of what was begun, many Verses before, in this Chapter, I shall refer you to two of them, to explain this Part of our Text.

I. THE first Text that I shall turn you to is Verse 12. Where you have the same Person speaking, under the Character of Wisdom. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, and find out Knowledge of witty Inventions.* It is weak and absurd to understand this *Wisdom* of an intellectual Habit, in Man; for tho' Men, by the Wisdom that God has given them, do find out many curious Inventions; yet it may be observed, in many undeniable Instances, that the Wisdom here speaking, is the *personal Wisdom* of God, and not any Habit that is in Men; for this Wisdom was with God, from everlasting; but Men were not in Being, at that Season, which is here, all along, referred unto, even before the Creation of the World. This Wisdom must needs be intended of some *Person*, that existed before the Hills and Mountains were framed; and they were formed before Man himself. Again, as this Wisdom is not intended of an intellectual Habit in Man; so it is not intended of that infinite and essential Perfection of God, or Property of the divine Nature, whereby God knows all Persons and Things: for then what is spoken of one Person of the Holy Trinity, under the Name and Stile of Wisdom, would be equally applicable to each Person in the Godhead: because infinite Wisdom belongs to each of them. But the things, here spoken of Wisdom, can be applicable to none in Heaven or on Earth, but to Jesus Christ alone; and unto his being
set

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set up, from everlasting, to be a Surety for his People ; and Mediator between God and Men. Therefore our Text, with the Context, is to be understood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the personal Wisdom of God ; who, in the Fulness of Time, took upon him our Nature, became Man, bore our Guilt by Imputation, and died and rose again for his People. Observe it every where, thro' this Chapter, and you may see, that the whole Discourse runs in the Name of a Person ; and the Properties of a Person are all along ascribed to him.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that under the Term *Wisdom*, sometimes we are to understand the *Holy Scriptures*, the *Word of Wisdom* ; or all the divine Revelation of Jesus Christ ; and of the Knowledge of Christ, made ours, 1st Cor. i. 30. *Who of God is made unto us, Wisdom, &c.* And it is also to be understood sometimes of a prevailing, reverential Fear of God upon the Hearts of Men ; and for the whole of Religion in the Power of it ; for the Hatred of Sin, and the sincere Practice of Godliness, Job xxviii. 28. *The Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, is Understanding.* Which things I just hint at, that any one may see, I allow, that the Word *Wisdom*, in Scripture, is sometimes to be taken in some other Sense, than can be admitted in our Text : But, *Wisdom* that speaks in this Verse, is no other than that *Λόγος* of whom the Apostle *John* speaks, *John* i. 1: *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was*

with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the Beginning with God; and all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. This is that personal Wisdom that made the Heavens and Earth. Pſal. cxxxvi. 5. To him that by Wisdom made the Heavens. Prov. iii. 19. The Lord by Wisdom founded the Earth. This Wisdom is the Lord Jesus Christ, Col. i. 16. By him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are on Earth; visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and for him.—We may also see, that in the New Testament, this Name and Title of Wisdom is given to Jesus Christ; 1 Cor. i. 24.—Christ, the Wisdom of God. Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. And he gives this Title to himself, Luke vii. 35. Wisdom is justified of all her Children. Upon the whole, when it is said, I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, The Meaning is, I am the personable Wisdom of God, and infinite Wisdom and Prudence dwell with me. I take Wisdom and Prudence to be but two Terms, expressive of the same thing; for Prudence is but the wise disposing of things, according to the Circumstances of Persons; and choosing out the fittest Time and Way for doing any thing. Accordingly you have these two Terms used promiscuously in Scripture, Prov. xvi. 21. The wise in Heart shall be called

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led prudent. Matt. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to Babes.* 1 Cor. i. 19. *I will destroy the Wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the Understanding of the prudent.* Now, tho' it was the former Part of the 12th Verse that I had principally to do with; yet I cannot forbear to take Notice how this personal Wisdom was interested in our Salvation from first to last. The Invention of Sinners Salvation was his, as well as the Father's, *I Wisdom find out Knowledge of witty Inventions:* He found them out, not by Revelation; but as he settled them with the Father in his eternal Counsel. Permit me to assist your Thoughts about this Expression, for the Honour of Christ, and for your own Comfort.

(1.) WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom was the framing and settling of all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth! *Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* It was the personal Wisdom of God that made all in Heaven, Earth and Seas.

(2.) WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom, was that of Christ's taking our Nature, with its Infirmities! That the great *God over all* should become Man; that the *mighty God*, and Father of Eternity, should become a *Child born*, Isa. ix. 6. This is the Wonder of Heaven and Earth. This is the great *Mystery*

tery of Godliness; God was manifested in the Flesh. Yet this was the Counsel and Covenant of Christ, with the Father, from everlasting.

(3.) WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom was that of transferring the Guilt of our Sins to Christ the Surety, by Imputation; that his Righteousness might become ours the same Way! *He was made Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* He did nothing to contract our Guilt and our Debts; and we can do nothing to prepare a justifying Righteousness, for ourselves, before God; but as Jesus Christ consented to be made Sin for us; so we consent or submit to the Righteousness of Christ. *He was made Sin for us by Imputation, and we are made the Righteousness of God in him* by gracious Imputation. It was God the Father that made our Sins to meet upon him; and it is God the Father that imputes the Righteousness of Jesus Christ to Believers. Here's just Matter of Wonder; the Just died for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. The Physician was wounded and bruised, that he might heal diseased Souls. And this, Jesus Christ, the personal Wisdom of God consented unto from everlasting.

(4.) WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom was that of the Redemption of lost Sinners, thro' the Obedience and Death of Jesus Christ, as our Surety and Mediator between God and Men! wherein all divine Perfections

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Perfections might be display'd, and God be glorified in the Salvation of believing Sinners, through the perfect Righteousness of Christ. And that divine Justice should be satisfied by the Obedience and Death of another; even one that had never sinned; *the Lamb of God, without Blemish and without Spot,* 1 Pet. i. 19. That he should bear the Guilt of his People, and then undergo their Punishment, that he might pay their Debts, and purchase their Lives, and make their Peace with God. And thus *Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.* Justice and Mercy are intirely reconciled in God's Way of Salvation of Sinners thro' the Merits and Righteousness of Christ, apprehended by Faith; and thus *God can be just, and the Justifier of them that believe.* And believing Sinners are freed from eternal Condemnation, and are brought back into the Favour of God, and have obtain'd a Title to all the Blessings of the Purchase of Jesus Christ, and of the new Covenant and Promises, and to Eternal Life.

(5). WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom was the Settlement of the Covenant of Grace, between the Father and Son, for the Conveyance of all needful Grace to undeserving Souls! This is that Covenant, that is ordered in all things, and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Its Blessings are all great and glorious, they are suitable and sure. It is an unchangeable Covenant. What it contains are the
sure

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sure Mercies of *David*, that is of *Jesus Christ*. *Isa. lv. 3. I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David.* That is to give you the Mercies; as the *Apostle* explains it, *Acts xiii. 34.* For God's making a Covenant with Men now, is to give the Blessings of the new Covenant.

(6.) WHAT a wonderful Invention of Wisdom, is the Believer's Union with *Jesus Christ*! That *Christ* and they, make but one spiritual Body; he is their Head of Life and Influence, and they are his living Members; they live in and upon him; and he lives in them, by Faith, *Ephes. iii. 17.* *Christ* lives, and therefore the Believer shall live also, *John xiv. 19. Their Life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3.*

2. THE second Scripture I shall turn you to, that may make it appear, that by *Wisdom*, we are to understand the *personal Wisdom* of God; and that it is *Christ* himself, that speaks in our Text, is *Verle 15, 16.* *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice, by me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.* This can be no other than the eternal Son of God; in whom are hid all the Treasures of *Wisdom and Knowledge*, *Col. ii. 3.* Not hid from us; but laid up in him for us. It is he that said *ver. 14. I have Understanding, I have Strength.* This is *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*, *1 Cor. i. 24.* This is he that has all Power in *Heaven and Earth*, *Matt. xxviii. 18.* The several Governments

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governments of the Nations are given to whom he will. They that are set over others, to administer Justice, have their Trusts from Jesus Christ; and they must all give Account to him, *the King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. And whatsoever Qualifications Men have, to fit them for Government, they have all from Christ; they have no Wisdom or Skill, no Principles of Justice and Mercy, but what they receive from him. And as long as they rule in Righteousness, they should be honour'd and obey'd by the common People.

Use 1. If Jesus Christ is the personal Wisdom of God, then there are no Bounds or Limits to his Understanding and Knowledge. He that knows the eternal Counsels of God, must needs know the Hearts, Designs and Desires of Men. So he told the Apostle *John*, not for his Information, but that he might write it to the Churches. *Rev. ii. 23. I am he that searcheth the Reins and the Heart.* He knows all the Thoughts, as well as the Words and Actions of Men, of whatsoever Nation they are, or whatsoever Language they speak; and it makes no matter to him, whether they are in Darkness or Light; *they are both alike to him. All things are naked and opened to the Eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* As he knows all the Wickedness of the Sinner's Heart; so he knows all the secret Desires and Breathings of every gracious Soul after himself and his Grace. They may remember

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member it with Comfort; *Lord all my Desires are before thee, and my Groanings are not hid from thee, Psal. xxxviii. 9.*

Use 2. THEN he is fittest to be a Teacher to his People: for he knows all the deep Counsels of God. He is fittest to shew Men what they are to believe; how they are to worship and live. There is *none teacheth like him*; so patiently, truly, powerfully and effectually: He teacheth to profit. *Isa. xlviii. 17. I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.* So as to encline the Heart to put away all known Sin, with Hatred; and to fall in with every known Duty; and to choose God in Christ for their Portion; and to lay hold of the new Covenant for themselves; and the good Part, that shall never be taken away from them: and to desire to win Christ and be found in him and his Righteousness; and to pray, and long, and labour to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God.

Use 3. ALL the Disciples of Christ should endeavour to approve themselves to be the Children of Wisdom, in abstaining from all Appearance of Evil: not to satisfy themselves in any Duty performed, without Communion with God, and some Influences from Heaven in the Way of Duty; and to prize and improve every Season of Grace, to gain more sanctified Knowledge; more Faith in the Son

of

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of God ; more Conformity to Jesus Christ :
To live in an holy, reverential Fear of God :
To study Sincerity towards God, in all the
Parts of Religion : In minding the Affairs of
the Soul more than the Body ; and the Con-
cerns of Eternity more than the Things of
Time : In building the Soul and Hope upon
the Rock Christ : Endeavouring to observe
every Command of God ; but, when they
have done all, not to rest upon the Duties
done ; to hope for Acceptance with God,
or to obtain Eternal Life for them ; but to
count themselves unprofitable Servants, and
to rest alone upon the Merits of Jesus Christ.—
And true Wisdom consists not only in taking
care to gain true Grace, but in a careful
Endeavour to clear up their Interest in the
Love and Favour of God in Christ. Even
as the Psalmist did, *Psal. xxxv. 3. Say to
my Soul, I am thy Salvation.* Those that are
saved, desire to have their Interest in God
and his Salvation cleared up. Say it to my
Soul. O let thy Spirit witness unto his own
Work ; that I stand related to God in Christ
by Faith ; that my Sins are pardon'd ; and
the Power of Sin is taken away. *Restore un-
to me the Joy of thy Salvation,* *Psal. li. 12.*
God's Salvation cannot be lost, but the Com-
fort and Joy of that Salvation may be lost,
for a Season. He does not pray, Lord, bring
me into a saved State ; but restore the Joy
of it. The Joy of Salvation may be with-
holden, for a Season, not only to shew the
Sovereignty

Sovereignty of God, but as needful for us; to humble the Soul for Sin; to try Grace and Sincerity; to quicken the Soul to more affectionate Prayer; to teach them to prize more the Word of God and Ordinances of Christ; and dispose them, by their own Experience, to pity, and endeavour the Comfort of others, that may be in like Trouble.

Secondly, I AM now to take Notice of the *Season*, whereunto all those things are to be refered, which are spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that's imply'd in the Word *then*; then *was I by him*; as *one brought up with him*. But that we may the more clearly see, what things the Word *then* refers us unto, I shall begin with *ver. 22. The Lord possessed me, in the Beginning of his Way; before his Works of Old*. Observe, here are two distinct Persons; one speaking, and the other spoken of; *The Lord possessed me*. This Expression refers to the Person of the Son of God; who, all along, in this Chapter, has Personal Properties attributed unto him; and can be understood of no other Person in Heaven or Earth, but of him who is both God and Man, in one Person. And when personal Wisdom speaks thus, *The Lord possessed me*; the Meaning is, that God the Father pitch'd upon, elected, and appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Work of a Surety and Mediator, for the Redemption and Salvation of lost Sinners; on which account

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count he is called God's Elect, and Servant; Isa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth.* Christ was the eternal Son of God, by *Nature*; but he was Mediator and Surety, by *the Will* of God the Father. Hence he takes a seeming Pleasure, to speak of the *Will* of the Father about the Redemption of Sinners. John vi. 38. *I came, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.* Heb. x. 7. *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God.* The Salvation of fallen Mankind, is to be resolved into the mere good Will and Pleasure of God: for he was intirely at Liberty, either to redeem, or not to redeem lost Mankind: He might have left them without a Saviour; as he did the fallen Angels: he was no more indebted to one than to the other: God's own mere Good-will and Pleasure made the Difference. But tho Jesus Christ speaks of the Salvation of Sinners, as the Will of the Father; yet not without the Will and ready Consent of Jesus Christ himself: he could not have been a Surety without his own Consent; nor would the Punishment inflicted upon him, as a Surety, have been just, if he had not consented to stand in the Room and Stead of his People. But we are to observe the *Season*, when God the Father possessed the Lord Jesus Christ for his Work of Redemption: and that was *in the Beginning of his Way*, and *before his Works of Old*. Or before his oldest Works; that is, before the Creation of the World;

20 *The Everlasting Love of* Serm. I.
World; and if it was before Time began,
then it was from everlasting; as it is expressed
in the next Words. And so it refers to the
eternal Counsel and Decrees of God. The
Creation of the World was the first Discovery
of the divine Perfections; and the first Break-
ing up of some of God's eternal Counsels;
which had lain hid in the Breast of God.
Rom. i. 20. *The invisible things, from the
Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being
understood by the things that are made, even his
eternal Power and Godhead.* But it is said
that God the Father possessed Jesus Christ,
as Mediator, before his Works of Old;
therefore he must have his personal Existence,
as the Son of God, from Eternity. Col. i.
17. *He was before all things, and by him all
things consist.* This is further explain'd, ver.
23. *I was set up from Everlasting, from the
Beginning, or ever the Earth was.* The Lord
Jesus Christ had not any actual Existence,
from Eternity, in our Nature, either in Soul
or Body; neither had he a Spiritual Body:
there was no need of it, in order to settle the
Covenant of Redemption, between the Fa-
ther and him, concerning the Salvation of
Sinners. And should he have had such a
Body, he would not have been *the Seed of
the Woman; the Seed of Abraham; the Shiloh
or Son of Jacob; the Offspring of David;*
and therefore would not have been the pro-
mised Messiah, and *our near Kinsman;* and
then he could not have been our Redeemer:
for

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for the *Right of Redemption* had not lain in him. But the Meaning is—— I, the eternal Son of God, was *set up*, by the Father, in his eternal Counsel and Covenant, to be the only Mediator between God and Men. Here, again, may be observed, the Personality of our Lord Jesus Christ asserted, as distinct from the Father. (1.) He was *set up* to be the Surety for lost Sinners; for so they were, in the View of God, *that calls and beholds things that are not, as tho they were.* So Jesus Christ is called, *Heb. vii. 22. The Surety of a better Testament.* God the Father, out of his infinite Wisdom and mere good Pleasure, before the Foundation of the World, enter'd into a Covenant of Grace with Jesus Christ, the second *Adam*, and with him, for all the Elect, as the spiritual Seed of Christ; in which he was set, with his own Consent, in the Place of a Surety, to fulfil the Demands of the holy Law, by active and passive Obedience; or by obeying and dying, in the Room and Stead of his People; that he might satisfy divine Justice, and *magnify the Law and make it honourable.* And this he did, by bringing to it such an Obedience of Life and Death, as the holy Law could not have laid Claim unto; that is, the Obedience of him that was God-Man, in one Person: for tho the God-head was not under the Law; neither could be subject to the Law; yet it was the Obedience of one, that was very God, as well as very Man. This gave
such

such a Value to the Obedience of Christ, in Life and Death, as our Surety, that it was not only satisfactory, but also meritorious: And thus divine Justice and the holy Law of God, receiv'd at the Hands of the Surety, *double for all the Sins* of his People. Thus he paid the Sinners Debts; and ransom'd their Souls from Destruction; purchased all necessary Grace for them, whereby the Receiver might be fitted for the Service and Enjoyment of God; all which Blessings, tho they were bought with the Price of the precious Blood of Christ; yet they are all the free Gift of God, to every one that believes in Jesus Christ; and Faith also which is the Means of obtaining actual Interest, both in Christ and them, is not of our own working, but is the Gift of God. (2.) Again, God the Father *set up* Jesus Christ, from everlasting, to be the very Person, who should conquer Satan and destroy his Kingdom of Darkness. Therefore God the Father is said to *make him strong for himself*, Psal. lxxx. 17. and he is stronger than the strong Man armed; not only consider'd as he is God Almighty, but as he is Mediator: for as God he could not be said to be *made* strong; for it is impossible to add any thing to infinite Power: but consider Jesus Christ as Mediator, so he received his Qualifications for the Discharge of his Work; Wisdom, Power and Treasures of Grace. Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell.* The
Fulness

Fulness of the God-head, that dwelt in him
bodily, mention'd; *Col. ii. 9.* was not at the
Pleasure of the Father, but by the Necessity
of his divine Nature; but his mediatory
Fulness of Wisdom, Power, Authority and
Grace, were at the Pleasure of the Father.
(3.) The Lord Jesus Christ was *set up*, from
everlasting, as the very Person, who should
subdue the Hearts of his People to himself;
make them willing in the Day of his Power;
and convey the Grace of his Purchase to their
Souls. By Nature, they were Enemies,
and that in their very Minds; unwilling that
the Lord Jesus Christ should reign over them,
Luke xix. 14. but God the Father set up
Christ to be King in *Sion*, *Psal. ii. 6.* that
he might make all his People willing in the
Day of his Power, *Psal. cx. 3.* God him-
self has spoken it; *Thy People shall be willing
in the Day of thy Power.*

It is added, *ver. 24. When there was no
Depths, I was brought forth.* Not brought
forth, as to his *Being*, as Creatures are, who
had no Being before; nor as to his *Sonship*,
as tho he had not been the Son of God be-
fore; as is the Case of the adopted Sons of
God: There was a Time when they were
not the Sons of God; but there never was a
Time, when Jesus Christ was not the Son of
God. But when personal Wisdom saith, *I
was brought forth*; the Meaning is, I came
out of the *Bosom of the Father*, where I had
lain from all Eternity; and I was brought
forth,

forth, as the Product of infinite Wisdom, and unchangeable Counsel, boundless Goodness, matchless Love and Riches of Grace; and I was *brought forth* to the Work of a Surety; and Office of a Mediator between God and Men; that I might *restore* to both *that which I took not away*. Again, ver. 25. *Before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills was I brought forth*: For it was the personal Wisdom of God that gave that Command, Gen. i. 9. *Let the Waters under the Heaven, be gathered together into one Place, and let the dry Land appear*. Then it was, that the Mountains were settled. And he that was before this, must be from Eternity. So the Eternity of God is described by Moses; Psal. xc. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth or the World: Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God*. Ver. 26. *While as yet, he had not made the Earth, or the Fields; nor the highest Part of the Dust of the World*. That is, before Man was made. They are but Dust: but tho' by Reason of Sin, they are viler than the Beasts that perish; yet, consider'd as reasonable Creatures, they are *the highest Part of the Dust of the Earth*. And then, the Meaning is; that Jesus Christ was set up, by the Father, as a Surety for Sinners, before the first Man received his Being. Ver. 27. *When he prepared the Heavens, I was there*. When the wonderful Curtain of the visible Heavens was spread abroad; and

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when all the glorious Lights of Heaven, the Sun, Moon and Stars were made; and all the Orbs, in which they are placed; when their several Stations were appointed them; and all their sweet Influences were given them; all which they observe to this very Day, without jarring, or interfering one with the other, or, in the least, failing to fulfil the Word of their great Creator.

Then, saith personal Wisdom, *I was there.* Angels and Men were not there, so much as to behold, much less to assist, in the Work of Creation; but *I was there*, not as a Spectator, to behold what another was doing; but as the Creator of all in Heaven and Earth.

Col. i. 15, 16, 17. *Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first born of every Creature.*

This is not to be taken passively; as he that first received Being, for Jesus Christ was no part of the Creation; but it is to be taken actively, as he that gave Being to all Creatures, in Heaven and Earth: ver. 16. *For by him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are on Earth; visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*— Job xxxviii. 4. God asked Job a Question to humble him. *Where wast thou, when I laid the Foundation of the Earth?* Job and every Creature must be silent here. But the eternal Word and Wisdom of God can say, *I*

was there; when God prepared the Heavens,
I was there; and when he set a Compass up-
on the Face of the Deep, I was there, as
the great Creator and Disposer of all things.
Moreover, ver. 28, 29. When he established
the Clouds above; when he strengthened the
Fountains of the Deep; when he gave to the Sea
his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his
Commandment: when he appointed the Foun-
dations of the Earth: Then was I by him, &c.
When he established the Clouds; the ba-
lancing of the Clouds is one of the greatest
Wonders in Nature: That they should hold
such a vast Quantity of Water, and be carried
like a Sea, upon the Winds; and here and
there, at the Pleasure of God, should empty
themselves, in gentle Rains, for the refresh-
ing of the Earth, and not be permitted to fall
in such Quantities, as might destroy both
Man and Beast; this sets forth, both the
Power and Goodness of God. Again, when
he gave the Seas his Decree, or his Command-
ment. Hitherto shalt thou come and no further
and here shall thy proud Waves be staid. Tho
the Seas are such an unruly Body, that it is
not possible to bring them under any human
Laws and Government; yet it is at the
Command of God; his powerful Word keep
it within Bounds. Jer. v. 22. Fear ye not
me, saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my
Presence? who have placed the Sand for the
Bound of the Sea, by a perpetual Decree, that
it cannot pass it; and tho the Waves thereof do
themselves

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themselves, yet can they not prevail; tho they
roar, yet can they not pass over it. It was the
personal Wisdom of God, that gave to the
Seas this Commandment. And the *Winds*
and *Seas obey him.* Luke viii. 26— *When*
he appointed the Foundations of the Earth. The
Earth and Seas together, are one great Globe,
hung in the Air, and founded upon nothing;
and there it has kept its Station, ever since
the Creation of the World, to this Day, and
has nothing to support it, but the Almighty
Power of God; and yet the Earth is here
said to have a Foundation; because God has
made it so firm, by his powerful Word, that
it cannot be moved. It is said, by the eter-
nal Wisdom of God, that he was there pre-
sent, at the *appointing* of the Foundation of
the Earth. Not only at the *laying* of it; but
at the eternal Decree and Counsel of God,
when he *appointed* the Foundations of the
Earth.— Thus I have endeavour'd to
clear the Truths, contained in the second
Part of the Words, which sets forth the E-
ternity of Christ, the personal Wisdom of
God, imply'd in the Word *then*; shewing
the *Season*, whereunto all these things are to
be referred, and that is, before the Creation
of the World, and therefore from Eternity.
Before I proceed to take Notice of the third
general Head, which is the chief thing in
the Text, I shall make a little Application
of what has been said.

Use 1. WE learn from hence, the Lord Jesus Christ is *very God*; truly and properly God: for none existed from Eternity but God himself. The Lord Jesus Christ is not a made God; or a God only by Office; not an inferior God; but God by Nature; *the mighty God; God Almighty; God over all blessed for ever.* The only living and true God; the great God and our Saviour.

Use 2. THEN all Men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father; that is with divine Honour. They should honour his Message, by believing it; and honour him, with trusting their Souls in his Hands; and honour him, by worshipping and obeying him.

Use 3. THIS shews the Excellency of the Christian Religion above all others, in that it was founded by him that founded Heaven and Earth. The Christian Religion excels all others, as much as Jesus Christ excels all other Persons: and that Difference is more than between the created Heavens and Earth.

Use 4. IN as much as Jesus Christ was set up, by the Father, from Everlasting, to be a Mediator between God and Men; we learn, that God the Father was equally concern'd with the Lord Jesus Christ, for the Salvation of lost Sinners. I mention this to
remove

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remove a Mistake of some weak Christians, who have thought, that God the Father was no further concern'd for the Salvation of Sinners, than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lover of Souls, inclines him to it, by his continual Intercession. Whereas it was God the Father that *found out* and *appointed* Jesus Christ to be a Surety; it was he that *gave to* Christ his Work; Qualification and Charge, as a Mediator; It was he that gave him a Commandment to lay down his Life for his People; and it was God the Father that rewarded Jesus Christ for the Discharge of his Mediatory Work: *He humbled himself and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name.* And again, *Therefore doth my Father love me; because I lay down my Life.*

Use 5. HERE you have a Specimen of the everlasting Love of God in Christ towards lost Sinners. *Jer. xxxi. 3. I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore with Loving-Kindness have I drawn thee.* That is, I have persuaded and enabled thee to lay hold of Jesus Christ and of the New Covenant; this is the Father's Drawing. *John vi. 44. No Man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* It is God, by his Word and Spirit, that inclines the Soul to accept of Jesus Christ, as his Gift, and to give up it self to him. This is the necessary

cessary Mercy that comes as a Fruit of everlasting Love, and takes Place, in order to Justification and Salvation. *Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Use 6. By this also we learn, who is the surest Refuge for his People in all Generations, even the eternal God; that is God in Christ. *Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the Heavens in thy Help, and in his Excellency on the Skies; the eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms.*



S E R M O N II.

Prov. viii. 30, 31.

Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his Delight; rejoycing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.

IN the former Discourse I have shewn, who it is that speaks in our Text; and that is, the *personal Wisdom* of God; the Lord Jesus Christ; and also the Person of whom he speaks; and that is, God the Father.

I HAVE also shewn the *Season*, unto which all those things are to be refered; that Jesus affirms, concerning himself. And now I am to take Notice of what is expressed in the Text; and there are three things to be observed, very distinct, one from the other.

First. WHAT is imply'd in those two Expressions ; *Then was I by him ; as one brought up with him.*

Secondly. THE mutual and superlative Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight, that God the Father and Son took in each other, from Eternity ; express'd in these Words ; *I was daily, or continually, his Delight ; rejoycing always before him.*

Thirdly. THE subordinate Pleasure and Delight, that Jesus Christ took in the Prospect of the Salvation of Sinners, even from everlasting. This is set forth in two Expressions. *Rejoycing in the habitable Part of his Earth ; and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.* Not with the Angels, but with the Sons of Men ; because he was to take their Nature ; not the Nature of Angels. *Heb. ii. 14, 16.*

First. WHAT is imply'd in these two Expressions ; *Then was I by him ; as one brought up with him.*

1. I WAS by him ; that is, one with him ; united to him ; of the same Essence ; having the same divine Perfections ; glorified with the Father, before the World was ; conversing with him ; lying in his Bosom ; and of his eternal Counsel. *John i. 18. The only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* This Expression, in our Text, strongly implis, the Distinction

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distinction of Persons in the God-head; one is said to be by the other; That cannot be intended of one and the same Person; for that Notion would run Men into great Absurdities. We learn even from our Text, as well as many others in the Old-Testament, that the People of God in that Day, own'd these three Doctrines:

(1.) **THE** Distinction of Persons in the Godhead; *Then I was by him.* And David believed the same Doctrine, *Psal. cx. 1. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my Right-Hand.* Our Lord Jesus Christ took Notice of the same Words; *Matt. xxiv. 44.*

(2.) **THEY** believed the Eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he was before the Worlds were made, as our Text and the Context abundantly affirm. And our Lord Jesus Christ himself asserted the same, *John viii. 58. Before Abraham was, I am.*

(3.) **THEY** believed the Equality of the Messiah with the Father, as he was the Creator of the World. Therefore it is very absurd for such as own the divine Authority of the holy Scriptures, to call these Doctrines in Question. The Lord Jesus Christ was by the Father, at the Creation of the World, as the *Builder* of all things; and therefore was and is very God. *Heb. iii. 4. He that built all things is God.* The Creation is there called a *Building*. And a most curious Building it is, that no wise Man did ever pretend to mend. Some wise Men have
C 5
invented.

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invented most curious Arts and Engines, which have been, for a while, very much admired; yet afterwards have been very much mended and improv'd, by themselves or others. And truly Men hardly build an House, but afterwards they either wish for, or make some Amendments: but God's curious Building of the World has stood many thousands of Years, to be view'd, and closely consider'd, by the wisest of Men, and yet none of them all can tell, what other useful Creature might have been made; or wherein any one Creature could have been made more useful to itself, or to others: Or what Member, in any Creature could have been better placed, or what more added, or which might have been spared. And it was the Lord Jesus Christ that made them all. That's the first Expression. *I was by him.*

2. *I was brought up with him.* This is spoken after the Manner of Men. And may refer to Jesus Christ both as God, and as Mediator between God and Men.

(1.) *I was brought up with him,* as the eternal Son of God, of the very same Essence and Substance with the Father, having the same divine Perfections. *John i. 14. We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. And the express Image of the Father's Person. Heb. i. 3. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. Col. ii. 9. There is nothing in the Father, but is also in the Son. There*

fore

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fore Jesus Christ told *Philip*, John xiv. 8. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

(2.) I was brought up with him; that is, I was with the Father from Everlasting. Not by him as a Stranger, but *brought up with him*; which implies, intimate Acquaintance, and perfect Knowledge of each other. When two Persons often *see* and *converse* with each other, they contract Acquaintance; but if they are *brought up* together, in the same House and Family; such are supposed to have the more intimate Knowledge of, and familiar Acquaintance one with the other; therefore Jesus Christ is said to be brought up with the Father; because he has such perfect Knowledge of God the Father, as no Angel in Heaven can have. They and we have our best Knowledge of God by Revelation; but Jesus Christ has it by Necessity of Nature. They and we have it in Measure, and a finite Knowledge it must needs be; but the Knowledge that Jesus Christ hath of the Father is infinite. We have no such Knowledge of God the Father, as we have thro' the Son, *Matt. xi. 27. No Man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he, to whom the Son will reveal him.* Therefore when Jesus Christ took on him our Nature, and appear'd in Flesh, he is said to *come out from the Father*, John xvi. 28. He often speaks of himself in this Stile; which implies, that all he spake and did, was in perfect Harmony with the Will of the Father; and an exact Fulfilment of the eternal

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nal Counsels and Designs, both of the Fa-
ther and Son. *John xii. 50. As the Father*
gave me Commandment, even so I speak. And
John xiv. 31. As the Father gave me Command-
ment, even so I do.

(3.) I WAS brought up with him; that is
one in the eternal Council with the Father.
Zech. vi. 13. The Counsel of Peace shall be be-
tween them both; that is, between the Father
and Son; between Jehovah and the Man who
is called the *Branch*; the Counsel of Peace;
that is the Covenant of Redemption: for that
laid the Foundation of Peace between God
and Men; and in the Fulfilment of which,
is *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth,*
and Good-will to Men. Thus we learn that
the Thoughts of God, from Everlasting,
were Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil. This
was to be brought about by him, that was
and is, both a *Priest* and a *King*; or a *Priest*
upon his Throne: a *Priest* to purchase our
Peace; and a *King* to apply his Purchase,
to make Sinners willing in the Day of his
Power; for the Conquest, and subduing of
Souls to himself, belongs to his Office of a
King: so we must look upon and own him
as well as a Saviour. He is a King by Birth,
by Donation, by Purchase, by Conquest
and by the hearty Consent of all his sincere
Disciples.— The Lord Jesus Christ was,
not only in that Council, that appointed the
Creation of all things in Heaven and Earth;
but in that, which settled the Salvation of
lost

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lost Sinners. This is call'd the Counsel of Peace : because its Design was to make the Sinner's Peace with God; and bring Men into an Estate of Peace with him, which was to be done thro' the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Peace-Maker, and thro' the Blood of his Cross. This is that wonderful Mystery of the divine Pleasure and Grace, that had lain secret, in the Bosom of God, from Ages and Generations; that is from all Eternity. Eph. iii. 9. *And to make all Men see what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, which, from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ : to the Intent, that now unto the Principalities and Powers, in heavenly Places, might be known, by the Church, the manifold Wisdom of God. According to the eternal Purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* God the Father committed the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Surety; and Jesus Christ undertook, from everlasting, to recover lost Sinners, and bring them back to God: And, in the fulness of Time, he made good his Obligations; and perform'd all the strict Conditions of the Covenant of Redemption, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ suffered for Sin, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God.* This was the Way of infinite Wisdom, for the expiation of Sin; and bringing in everlasting Righteousness; and bringing many Sons to Glory. So much be said, as to the Explication of those two Terms.

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Terms, *I was by him; I was brought up with him.*

Secondly, I am now to take Notice of the mutual, superlative Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight; that God the Father and Son took in each other, from all Eternity; which we have in these two Expressions; *I was daily his Delight; Rejoycing always before him.*

THE Delight that God the Father took in our Lord Jesus Christ, his dear, his only, eternal Son. *I was daily, or continually his delight;* for eternity is not measured out by Days and Nights—As there were, then, no Creatures, either in Heaven, or on Earth; the Delights of God the Father, must be in his own essential Perfections; his infinite Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth. But we must endeavour to carry our Thoughts to the particular Grounds and Occasions of the Father's Delight in Jesus Christ, according to the Intimations we have thereof in our Text, and in the Context.

(1.) THE Delight of God the Father in our Lord Jesus Christ was from beholding in him the very same essential, divine Perfections, as were in himself, Col. ii. 9. *The Fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.* In all these, the eternal Son of God was the express Image of the Father's Person, Heb. i. 3. The agreeableness of one Person to another, is one Ground of Love among Men. *Amos iii. 3. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* Christians cannot do so. And God and Men cannot

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cannot do so. And why can't they hold Communion one with another? It is because they have no Delight in each other; and there is no Delight, because there is no Agreement. But there was a perfect Agreement between the Father and Son, from everlasting, both in the Perfections of Nature, and perfect Harmony of Will and Counsel: The Will and Pleasure of the Father and Son, in all Respects, were the same.

(2.) THE Delight of the Father, in Jesus Christ, may imply, the Pleasure and Satisfaction that God the Father took in him, as making all things, at the first Creation, according to the Plat-form of eternal Counsel. When *Moses*, a Type of Jesus Christ, was admonish'd to make the Tabernacle, mention'd, *Heb. viii. 5.* It was said, *See thou make all things, according to the Pattern shewn thee in the Mount.* When all things, in the first Creation were finished, God the Father express'd his intire Satisfaction in all things that Jesus Christ had made; *Gen. i. 31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* That is well fitted to answer the Ends of infinite Wisdom; there was nothing made contrary to the Counsel of God; nothing was created useless and unprofitable, among all the Inhabitants of the Earth and Seas, *Psal. civ. 24. O how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* When it is said that *God saw all things that he had made*; it supposes his exact Notice

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Notice of all the *heavenly Bodies*, set in their Places, to keep their Stations, without jarring or interfering one with the other; or failing to fullfil their Courses, in their daily, or yearly Motions; and sending their Influences on the Earth. And God view'd the great Variety of Creatures on the *Earth* and in the *Seas*, and their usefulness one to another, and the wonderful Beauty, Harmony and Proportion of the whole; all setting forth the Wisdom, Power, Sovereignty and Goodness of their Creator. And God, in an especial Manner, view'd his Creature *Man*, that was made in his own Image, in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness, as no other Creature, on the Earth, was.

(3.) THE Father's Delight in Jesus-Christ was from *his choosing* him to the Office of a Surety and Mediator between God and Men. On which Account he is called *his dear Son*, or the Son of his Love; and *his beloved Son*. Col. i. 12, 13. *Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* You know that the Kingdom is Christ's, as Mediator; therefore so is Jesus Christ consider'd, when he is called there, the dear Son of God.

God the Father loved the Lord Jesus Christ from everlasting; John xvii. 24. *For thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.*

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World. This was the Father's Love to Jesus Christ, as Mediator : This will appear, if we consider the Petition itself, together with the Argument, that Jesus Christ made Use of to enforce it. *Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou gavest me ; for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.* Those whom thou gavest me. They were *his own* before, as he was God ; and so the Father had not more Right in them than he ; nor could the Father give to Christ as God a Right which he had not before ; but Jesus Christ is consider'd as Mediator, and so he received his People as the Gift of the Father ; or of God, consisting of three divine Persons ; for so we are to understand the Term Father, very often, in Scripture : and so we should when we are directed to pray to the Father, in the Name, or with Dependence on the Merits of Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and Men——Again, our Lord Jesus Christ speaks here, of the Glory which the *Father gave him.* That cannot be intended of his essential Glory, which he had in him, equal with the Father ; for so he could no more receive Glory from the Father, than the Father could receive his Glory from the Son : But there was a Glory, which God the Father gave to the Son, from everlasting, consider'd as Mediator ; as may be further hinted hereafter. But to see the
Force.

Force of the Argument, here made Use of by our Lord Jesus Christ; when he prays for the Glorification of his Disciples; wherein he infers the Father's Love to *them*, whom the Father himself had given to him, who were, in that Gift, consider'd as his Members. And then the Argument may be understood, in this short Paraphrase; *O righteous Father, thou hast given them to me, to be the spiritual Members of my Body; and as thou wilt glorify me, their Head; glorify them also, who are the Members of my spiritual Body; that they may be conformed to the Image of thy Son; perfect them in Grace and Holiness, and bring them all home to Glory, to be with me; for thou lovedst me, and them in me, before the Foundation of the World.* Tho' God the Father delighted in the Lord Jesus Christ, from everlasting, as his only eternal Son; yet he delighted in him also, upon this peculiar Account; as he himself chose him to be his Servant; to redeem and save lost Souls. *Isa. xlii. 1. Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.* That speaks of the Delight of God the Father in Jesus Christ, as Mediator; not as the eternal Son of God; for he is here called the Father's Servant; but he was not a Servant, or inferior to the Father, but as he accepted of the Offices of a Mediator. Besides, God's Delight in Christ must respect him as Mediator; because he is called *God's Elect*; Jesus Christ was not the Son of God by Election,

lection, as all Believers are; but God's Elect to the Work of a Surety and Mediator. Besides here also the Father hath said of him, in whom he delighted, that *he uphold him.* My Servant *whom I uphold.* Christ as God was Almighty, and needed not to be upheld; Nay, it was impossible to add anything to his Power, as God; Therefore Jesus Christ is to be consider'd as Mediator. And then we learn, that tho' it is impossible that any Degrees should be added to the infinite Love of the Father towards Jesus Christ, consider'd as he is God; yet there is a distinct Love to, and Delight of the Father, in Jesus Christ, consider'd as his chosen faithful Servant.

(4.) God the Father delighted in Jesus Christ from everlasting, as he beheld him perfectly fitted and qualified for his Work, as Mediator.

[1.] He beheld in him perfect Understanding; having in him, *all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* God the Father had said, of him; *Isa. xi. 3. I will make him of quick Understanding. I will make him so.* If Jesus Christ receives Wisdom and Knowledge, he does it, only as he is Man, for so he increased in Knowledge, or Wisdom; but as God he was Infinite in Knowledge; and so he could be no more knowing than he was from everlasting.

[2.] God

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[2.] God the Father beheld Jesus Christ, as Mediator, perfectly pure and holy in his Nature and Life, *1 Pet. i. 19. The Lamb of God, without Blemish and without Spot.* And therefore the only fit Person, that ever was made under the Law, to bring perfect Obedience to the holy Law; and who, by dying, as well as obeying actively, should magnify the Law and make it honourable; and, the same Way, should satisfy divine Justice; and ransom and save all that the Father had given to him.

[3.] THE Father beheld the Lord Jesus Christ, as strong and mighty to save, *Psal. lxxxix. 19. I have laid Help upon one that is mighty.* It is spoken of him that trode the Wine-Press alone; and as of the People there were none with him; so he did not need them. But observe again, that this must needs be understood of Jesus Christ, as Mediator; because he is said to be made strong. And so he is able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him: because he ever lives to make Intercession for them, *Heb. vii: 25.*

[4.] God the Father beheld the Lord Jesus Christ faithful to the Discharge of his great Trust, as a Surety both for God and Men, in whom God the Father himself could confide; and with whom he left all the Affairs of his own Glory. It is said of God, that *he putteth no Trust in his Saints, Job. xv. 15.* But God trusted all the Concerns of his own Glory in the Hands of his Son, *John iii. 35. The Father*
then

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ther loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his Hands. And Christ, as Mediator, was faithful to him that appointed him, Heb. iii 2.

(5.) God the Father delighted in the Lord Jesus Christ, on Account of his ready and chearful undertaking the Work of Redemption of lost Souls. This Readiness of Jesus Christ, to undertake the Work of Mediator, is express'd, *Psal. xl. 8. Lo, I come, to do thy Will, O God, thy Law is within my Heart; I delight to do thy Will.* This was the very Meat and Drink of Jesus Christ, John iv. 32, 34. *I have Meat to eat, that ye know not of.* And what was that? *My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* And tho' the laying down of his Life was the Commandment of the Father, John x. 18. Yet it was the hearty Consent of Jesus Christ; for so he affirm'd it. *No Man taketh my Life from me: I lay it down of myself; I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again; this Commandment have I received of my Father.* The Life of Jesus Christ was not extorted from him; but he laid it down; he gave it; he resign'd it; he yielded it up, Gal. i. 4. *Who gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World, according to the Will of God and our Father.* This also was the Will of Jesus Christ; the same that was the Pleasure of the Father, was the Delight and Pleasure of Jesus Christ; Isa. liii. 10. *It pleased the Lord to bruise him,*

be bath put him to Grief. But God the Father, no otherwise delighted in the Sufferings and Death of Christ, than he himself did; that is, as thereby he should display all the divine Perfections; and magnify the • Law and make it honourable; and ransom and redeem, and save lost Sinners, and bring many Sons to God and to Glory. And so the *Pleasure* of the Lord is explain'd, by another Verse in the same Chapter, to be intended of the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners, thro' the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ, *Isai. liii. 10. He shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his Days, and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hands.* Thus I have taken Notice of one Branch of the Second Head; that is, the Delight of God the Father in his Son; and I have shewn upon what Accounts he did so, from all Eternity. Before I proceed to the Second Branch, I shall drop a Word or two, by way of Application of this Head of the Father's Delight in Jesus Christ. Did God the Father delight in Jesus Christ, from all Eternity, as Mediator?—Then,

[1.] We learn from hence, the Interest that our Lord Jesus Christ has, as Mediator and Advocate, in the Court of Heaven. And what a Mercy all the Disciples of Jesus Christ have, in such an Advocate with the Father; even Jesus Christ the Righteous; not consider'd as infinite in Righteousness, as he is God; but having a perfect Righteousness,

ness, as our Surety, to plead before the Throne of Glory. And there also, he pleads with *his Father and our Father*; and with him that has delighted in him from everlasting: Moreover he pleads for those *whom the Father loves* altogether as well as he himself loves them. *I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me,* John xvi. 27. From all which, may be fairly gathered, that God the Father will always hear the Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate and Mediator, for us.

[2.] LEARN hence the great Love of Jesus Christ to his People; as the Father delights in Jesus Christ; and did so from everlasting; so Jesus Christ delights in his sincere Disciples. He tells them so; John xv. 9. *As the Father hath loved me; so have I loved you.* If he delighted in them, from everlasting, surely he will do so, when he has bestowed his Grace on them, and will still more delight in them, when he has perfected his Work of Grace and Holiness upon them.

2. I AM now to take Notice of the Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight that the Lord Jesus Christ took in the Father from everlasting; expressed in these Words; *rejoycing always before him.* As God the Father, from all Eternity, delighted in his eternal Son; so the Son delighted in the Father, from the same Foundation.

(1.) God the Son beheld in his Father eternally the same divine Perfections, as were eternally

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eternally in himself. Of which our Lord Jesus speaks, *John x. 30. I and the Father are one.* That is in Essence and Perfections. To express this superlative Love and Delight between the Father and Son, it is said that he lay in the Father's Bosom, *John i. 18. The only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* And Jesus Christ took Care to give the World undeniable Proof of his Love to, and Delight in the Father, *John xiv. 31. That the World may know that I love the Father.* And how was that manifested to the World? By his universal Obedience to the Father, as his Servant, consider'd as Mediator between God and Men, express'd in these Words, *as the Father gave me Commandment, even so I do.* And *John viii. 29. I do always the things that please him.*

(2.) Jesus Christ delighted in God the Father, because he confided in his Faithfulness, and committed all the Concerns of his own Glory into his Hands. Never was such a Trust committed to any Creature in Heaven or Earth. He that putteth no Trust in his Saints; put his intire Trust in the King of Saints. And upon that Trust, all the People of God went safe to Glory, before the coming of Jesus Christ in the Flesh.

(3.) Jesus Christ rejoyced always before the Father, as he made him Lord over all in Heaven and Earth, *Matt. xxviii. 18. All Power is given to me both in Heaven and Earth.*

John

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John iii. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his Hands.* The Keys both of Heaven and Hell; that he should give eternal Life to as many as the Father had given to him. Moreover, God the Father gave him to be Head over all things to the Church. Psal. ii. 6. *I have set him to be King upon my holy Hill of Sion.* This was much more the Delight of Jesus Christ, than to be King of Nations; or to be the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.

(4.) JESUS Christ rejoiced always before the Father; as he received all his Qualifications for his mediatory Work from him. *A Body hast thou prepared me.* And all the Endowments of his Mind. It was he that made him of quick Understanding; and hid in him all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. It was he that made him strong for himself. He laid Help upon one that was mighty. And all his Treasures of Grace, as Mediator, were given him by the Father. Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell.* All these must needs refer to him as Mediator: for, as God, he could receive neither Wisdom, Power, nor Grace. *The Fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily,* Col. ii. 9. But that is not by the Gift, or at the Pleasure of the Father; but from the Necessity of Nature. But all that Jesus Christ had, as Man, he received from the Father; *He gave the Spirit, without Measure, unto him.*

(5.) THE Lord Jesus Christ rejoiced always before the Father, on Account of the many Promises that God the Father made him, with Relation to the Discharge of his Mediatorial Work. That he *should be upheld in his Work*; That he *should not labour in vain*; That he *should see his Seed, and the Pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his Hand*; That he *should sit at his own right Hand, till all his Enemies are made his Footstool*. And that the Gospel should be spread over all the World; and the Gentiles should come to the Knowledge and Faith of him. That he should, not only raise up the Tribes of Israel, but should give Light to the Gentiles; and should have the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession. That his Dominions should be from Sea to Sea, and to the uttermost Ends of the Earth; that all Nations shall be blessed in him; and the whole Earth shall be filled with his Glory. On such Accounts as these, our Lord Jesus Christ, as God-Man, delighted in, and rejoiced always before God the Father. — Here's a Pattern and Example for all the adopted Sons and Children of God: for as he has advanced them to the highest Honour, and to the greatest Privileges, in Jesus Christ; they also should delight themselves in the Lord; as they are commanded to do, *Psal. xxxvii. 4. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desire of thine Heart.* Delight in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus

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Jesus Christ, is peculiar to true Believers. They love him and are like him. There can be no Delight where there is no sincere Love, and there can be no true Love where there is no Likeness; and there is neither Love or Likeness without Faith and sincere Repentance. There are two things that I shall do before I finish this Sermon. First, Shew why all the reasonable Creatures should delight themselves in the Lord; but especially all the adopted Children of God; they are under double Obligations so to do. Secondly, Shall shew you who they are that delight themselves in the Lord.

[1.] WHY should all the reasonable Creatures delight themselves in the Lord?

[1. GOD deserves it, even from the common Bounty of his kind Providence: for he has provided a thousand Delights for us, more than were really necessary for the Support of Life; pleasant Fruits and Flowers, without Number, to delight the Eye, the Smell, the Taste; and pleasant Sounds to delight the Ear; and many things to delight the Understanding; and agreeable Relations, to render Life comfortable. All these teach reasonable Creatures to delight in the Lord, who is the Fountain and Spring of them all. And truly had it not been for the dreadful Work that the Fall has made, with our Nature, reasonable Creatures would first and principally have delighted in God himself, as the chief

Good ; and then in all other Things, as bearing any Resemblance to him, as the Original ; or as they might refer us to any of the divine Perfections ; thro' which, as in a Glass, we might behold the Creator of them all, as shadowed out, in his Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth. And then, those Creatures would have been most esteemed by us, that would have been found, to bear the nearest Resemblance to the chief Good. But Man, since the Fall, walks by a false Light, and measures all Things by a crooked Rule ; that is, his own blind Mind and perverse Will. God himself is the chief Good, and the Original of all Goodness ; in that Respect, there is none good but God ; and therefore deserves to be loved and delighted in above all. And moreover, *God is good unto all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works*, Psal. cxlv. 9. *He is kind to the Unthankful and to the Evil*, Luke vi. 35. And he has been, many Ways, good and kind to ourselves. But God is, in a special Manner, *good to Israel, to such as are of a clean Heart*, Psal. lxxiii. 1. That is to sincere Penitents. But,

[2. God deserves our chiefest Delight, on Account of his richer Provisions of Grace, in Christ Jesus, and in his new Covenant for his People. Psal. xxxi. 19. *O how great is the Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the Sons of Men*.
God

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God has not only settled the Way of Salvation of lost Sinners, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ our Surety; but has published these glad Tidings, thro' the Gospel to us: It is by that Revelation alone, that we can know, *that God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself.* By this Revelation alone, we learn, who and what the Lord Jesus Christ is; what his Undertaking was; what he has done; and what he has purchased; and what he has convey'd to thousands of Souls; and what he can still do for, give to, and work in, the Hearts of Sinners: What Blessings he has further in Store to convey unto Men; and upon what Terms they may become ours. Thereby alone we learn that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save; and how wise and skillful; how merciful and gracious he is: and that *there is no Salvation in any other*: and that the very chief of Sinners may look unto him and be saved. These are such Acts of his Goodness as call for our Delights in the Lord.

BUT there are two Reasons of very great Weight, to be consider'd by us, why we should chiefly delight ourselves in the Lord; and they are, First, What God has wrought in us, and given to us; And, Secondly, What he has laid up for us.

1.] WHAT he has wrought in us, and given to us; even those Things *that accompany Salvation*, Heb. vi. 9. He has open'd our Eyes, who were born blind; he has

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shewn us ourselves and humbled us; and brought us to trust, not in ourselves, but in the living God. O what a blessed Sight has he given us of Christ Jesus, *the King, in his Beauty and Fulness of Grace.* John i. 14. *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.* We have had an happy Sight of the Glories of the New, yet everlasting Covenant.

We were deaf to the Calls of God, and to the gracious Proposals of the richest Blessings that Heaven could bestow upon the Sons of Men: but God has opened our Ears; he has given us *the hearing Ear, and an understanding Heart.* The Terrors of the Law, and the joyful Sound of the Gospel did not affect our Hearts. The Tidings of the Saviour, and the good News of Pardon of Sin, were not attended unto by such as lay under just Condemnation; the gracious Proposal of the true Riches were disregarded by those that were miserably poor; but God has opened our Hearts, as he did *Lydia's, to attend to the Things that are spoken,* Acts xvi. 14. And made us to hear the Voice of the Son of God, in his Word, John v. 25. *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the Dead, in Trespases and Sins, shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, in the Ministry of the Gospel, and they that hear shall live.*

MOREOVER he has drawn us, with the Cords of his Love, to forsake all known Sins, and to turn to the Lord. Jer. xxxi. 3.

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I have loved thee with everlasting Love, therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. This Drawing of God, is bending and inclining the Heart and Will, to consent unto, and fall in with, God's Terms of Salvation. And is the same with that Promise, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.*

AND God has followed these Acts of his Grace with the Pardon of our Sins, thro' the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ. Great and many Sins are forgiven, thro' the free Gift of Christ's Righteousness. Rom. v. 15—18. This may encourage the chief of Sinners, to look for the Pardon of their Sins. Ver. 20. *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.* Again, to call for our Delights in the Lord, he has added this Mercy, to take poor Strangers into his Family, and make them his dear Children, thro' Faith in Jesus Christ. John i. 12. Thus, by Grace, *they are made Heirs, with Christ of eternal Life it-self, Rom. viii. 17.* O how much is this Grace to be admired, by all the Children of God! 1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love, the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* And the Mercy that is always annexed to this is, that all the great and precious Promises are given to us. Jesus Christ being ours, all Things are ours; being espoused to Jesus Christ, we have right, thro' him to all his Purchase and Estate. *All Things are yours; for ye are Christ's.*

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2.] THERE is yet something further that calls for the Delight of the People of God in him; and that is, what he has *laid up* and further prepar'd for them in Heaven. Believers have something in Hand; but they have much more, as the Matter of their Hope; they have, now, the Promise of eternal Life, and they have the Earnest of it; but they shall have the Possession also. Heaven is now the Matter of their Hope, Col. i. 5. *For the Hope that is laid up for you in Heaven.* But they shall receive the End of their Hope, even the Salvation of their Souls. This is that Light that is sown for the Righteous, Psal. xcvii. 11. Grace and Glory. These are sown, as God has prepared them in his Purpose and Promises, and in eternal Life. This is that Crown of Life, which God will give to all that love him, 2 Tim. iv. 8. So that the weakest sincere Believer in Christ, may truly say, what that Man did, thro' Mistake, Luke xii. 19. *Soul, take thine Ease, eat drink and be merry; for thou hast Goods laid up for many Years.* Poor, weak, tempted, disconsolate Believer; Art thou afraid thou shalt want any good Thing? O thou of little Faith, wherefore dost thou doubt? Afraid of Want! when God himself is thine! his Christ thine; the Covenant of Grace, and all its great and precious Promises are thine; and Heaven itself is thine. O Soul, thou art not straitned in God, but in thy own Bowels; thou needest nothing to render thee happy and comfortable, but the Increase of thy Faith,

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Faith, to live upon thy Portion. Then thou mightest say, when all outward Things seem to fail; *I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.* O how, like a loving Father, has God laid up, great, suitable and sure Mercies for his Children! Does not all this call for their highest Delights in him?

[2.] I SHALL now shew you who they are that delight themselves in the Lord. I hope some Souls desire to make it out.

[1. SUCH as choose God in Christ above all for their Portion. Every gracious Soul does so. Lam. iii. 24. *The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul.* Psal. lxxiii. 26. *The Lord is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* Men delight in their own Portion more than in what is another Man's. And then the Soul delights in the Lord, when it esteems *his Favour as Life, and his Loving-Kindness better than Life,* Psal. lxiii. 3.

[2. WHEN the Soul sincerely, intirely gives up itself to the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. *They gave themselves to the Lord.* When they dedicate Body and Soul to the Lord, to be his for ever, then they delight in him.

[3. WHEN they make God in Christ, the Rest and Repose of their Souls. Desire is Love in Motion; *The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee,* Isa. xxvi. 8. And Delight is Love at Rest; satisfy'd with what it enjoys. *Return to thy Rest, O my Soul, that is to thy God; for be*

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hath dealt bountifully with thee. Then Souls delight in the Lord, when they make God their Home and Dwelling-Place. Men commonly delight in their own Dwellings. God has been so to his People, in all Ages, Psal. xc. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our Dwelling-Place in all Generations.*

[4. THEY delight in God himself, that delight in his Word; all that love God, love his Word; because thereby they learn the Will of God; their Relation to him; their Duty towards him, and their Interest in his Christ and his Covenant. Every gracious Soul can say, in some Measure, as David, Psal. cxix. 97. *O how do I love thy Law! thy whole revealed Will, It is my Meditation all the Day.* And as the Apostle, Rom. vii. 22. *I delight in the Law of God, after the inward Man.*

[5. THEY delight in God, that delight in the Work and Service of God; that count it their *perfect Freedom*; and as their *Meat and Drink*. Like the Lord Jesus Christ himself; John iv. 32. *I have Meat to eat, that ye know not of.* Ver. 34. *My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* Such count the *Ways of Wisdom, Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths Peace.*

[6. THEY delight in the Lord, that delight in the People of God, as they bear his Image of Righteousness and true Holiness. Psal. xvi. 3. *My Goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the Saints that are on the Earth;*
such

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such as are in part sanctified, *the Excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my Delight.* Not because they are rich in this World; but because they have *the true Riches.* Not because they have more human Learning, or brighter natural Parts than others; but because they *are taught of God.* Not because they are of better natural Dispositions than others, but because they love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity. Not because they are of our Opinion; but because they belong to Christ. They that delight in Sin, cannot delight in God; and they that delight in the Company and Conversation of Sinners, cannot delight in the Saints. They that love the Lord will hate all Evil. *Psal. cxvii. 10.* And they that love God and Holiness, will choose holy Company. *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy Precepts, Psal. cxix. 63.* Is it so with you?

[7. THEY delight in the Lord, that love to think of him; that which we love most, we most frequently, and delightfully think of. *Psal. cxxxix. 17. How precious are thy Thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the Sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the Sand: When I awake, I am still with thee.*

[8. THEY delight in the Lord, that breathe after him, and long for his Presence. *Ha. xxvi. 8. The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee. My Soul.*

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Soul desireth thee in the Night. And that Soul delights in the Lord, that is well pleased with any sensible Manifestations of his Love and Favour; any remarkable Assistance in Duty; any sensible Answers of Prayer; or Fulfilment of Promises. Or when they have no comfortable Enjoyment, they cannot but long after it, *Psal. xxxv. 3. Say to my Soul, I am thy Salvation.* Have you such Breathings of Soul after God?

Use 1. Do you delight in the Lord; then he delights in you: your Love and Delight in him, is not the Cause of his Delight in you; but the Fruit and Evidence of it. *1 John iv. 19. We love him because he first loved us.* God must love us, and give some Evidence of it too, before we can love him. Our Love is but of Yesterday; his was from everlasting.

Use 2. If you delight in the Lord, then he will answer all your Prayers to your very Heart's Content. *Psal. xxxvii. 4. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desire of thine Heart.* And what can you desire more? There's a Word for you that are of little Faith; who are too ready to limit the Holy One of Israel: you are, sometimes, uneasy, if God does not answer you in your Time and Way. O what weak, fleshly, unbelieving Thoughts, sometimes, arise

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rise in the Heart! Here's a Way prescribed
how you may have your own Will: *Delight
thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the
Desire of thine Heart.*

Use 3. JUDGE of prevailing Grace and
Holiness, in your Souls, by your Delight in
the Lord. For as Delight in Sin is the very
Spirit and Life of Sin; and argues the Guilt
and Reign of it, in the Soul: So Delight in
God is the very Spirit and Life of Religion
and Holiness. So much Delight as any one
has in God; so much Conformity he has un-
to God, and to the Son of God.

Use 4. ENDEAVOUR to prove your Love
to, and Delight in, the Lord, by maintain-
ing honourable Thoughts of him, under all
Afflictions. Endeavour to keep up a thank-
ful Remembrance of his great Goodness to
you. And believe that God will over-rule all
things for your Good. He has promised it,
Gen. xxxii. 12. Verily I will do thee Good.
Plead it with God, as *Jacob* did, that you
may experience it, as others of the People
of God have done. *Rom. viii. 28. We know
that all things work together for good, to them
that love God; to them that are called, accord-
ing to his Purpose.*

Use 5. ENDEAVOUR to imitate God, in his
Love and in his Holiness; in being good and
doing

doing good. True Love and Delight puts one upon Imitation of another : so it will you, if you delight in God, to be *Followers of God* ; to be *kind to the Unthankful and the Evil* ; but to love them best, that most resemble God and Jesus Christ. And to be ready to forgive many and great Offences ; for so God does for Christ's Sake ; and so should you. Let the Flesh and Corruption cavil while it will ; and raise a thousand Objections against it, the Rule is plain ; *Eph. iv. 32. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's Sake hath forgiven you.*

OCCASIONS of Differences will arise among the Disciples of Christ, tho' they are Children of the same Father, and incompassed with the same Enemies, and possessed of the same Blessings and Privileges, and design'd for the same Home and eternal Habitations : while they are here, Satan and Corruption will interrupt their Peace ; but if Differences arise, they ought not only to forgive one another, but to imitate God himself therein ; that is, to do it sincerely, heartily, readily, chearfully, and for ever. And such, of all the Disciples of Christ, as are most disposed hereto, are most like God and the Lord Jesus Christ ; but such as know not how, or when, to forgive their Brethren a few Offences, must needs be very defective in Grace :
such.

Serm. II. *Jesus Christ to a lost World.* 63

such too much forget their own greater and more numerous Offences against God, and their Need of daily Forgiveness; moreover, such peevish Professors give just Occasion to others to question, judging by the Rule of the Gospel, whether God has forgiven them their Trespases. Mat. vi. 14, 15. *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* May the God of Grace dispose you more and more to these Christian Duties.



S. E. R.



S E R M O N III.

Prov. viii. 31.

Rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.

I HAVE, in the former Discourse, taken notice of the mutual, superlative Love, Pleasure and Satisfaction that God the Father and Son took in each other, from everlasting; now, by these Words, I am directed to take notice of the subordinate Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight, that our Lord Jesus Christ took, from everlasting, in the Sons of Men; that is, in the Prospect of the Redemption and Salvation of the Sons of Men. And that's express'd these two Ways;

First, *REJOICING in the habitable Part of his Earth.*

Secondly, *MY Delights were with the Sons of Men.*

I SHALL endeavour to explain these two Expressions, and improve them to the Interest of Religion.

First, REJOICING *in the habitable Part of his Earth.*

HERE are two things to be considered distinctly; What we must understand by *the habitable Part of his Earth*? And that Jesus Christ rejoiced therein from everlasting.

I. WHAT are we to understand by *the habitable Part of his Earth*?

(I.) Not the Wilderness and solitary Places, which are not inhabited by the reasonable Creatures; for they are Ranges for wild Beasts: but *the habitable Part of his Earth*, is such Parts as Men were to inhabit, who should be made in the Image of God, in Knowledge, Righteousness and true Holiness; and therein more excellent than all the rest of his lower Works; but more especially, the Lord Jesus Christ rejoiced in the Prospect of the Sons of Men; as he himself was to appear on Earth, in their very Nature; and be Flesh of their Flesh, and Bone of their Bone. *Heb. ii. 14. Forasmuch as the Children, of Abraham, or that God had given him, were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he, himself likewise took Part, or partook, of the same; the same Flesh and Blood; a human Soul and Body as they had; and so became their near Kinsman, that he might redeem them: so, Ver. 16. He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.* Why is it said that he

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he took the Nature of the Seed of *Abraham*, and not of *Adam*? To inform us that Jesus Christ was not an Undertaker and Surety for all Men alike; but the Children of *Abraham*, or those to whom *Abraham* is a Spiritual Father, as he is to all that believe. So that Jesus Christ stood, as a Surety, for no more than those, who do or shall believe in Jesus Christ, and shall be eventually saved by him: for those only are the Children of *Abraham*.

(2.) THE *habitable Part of his Earth*, are such Places where the Gospel comes, bringing the good Tidings of Jesus Christ and his Salvation for lost Sinners; those Parts of the Earth are peculiarly the Lord's: for tho' the whole Earth, and all the Kingdoms of it are his, *Psal. xxiv. 1. The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof*; he made it, and he upholds it, and gives it to whom he will; yet there are some Parts of the Earth, that God chuses for *his own Inheritance*; not for the sake of the Ground or Lands, but for the sake of those that should inhabit them. That's *his Earth*, emphatically, where *his People* are placed by divine Providence, and where the Gospel Churches are. God has chosen them for his Habitation, *Psal. lxxviii. 16. This is the Hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever: That is, in the Churches of his Saints. Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. For the Lord hath chosen Sion, he hath desired it for his Habitation; this is my Rest,*
faith

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saith God, for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. And what is God's dwelling there? but committing his Oracles, his Statutes, his Ordinances to them, and especially his blessing the Means of Grace among them; for so it is added, for Explication, in the very next Words; *I will abundantly bless her Provision; I will satisfy her poor with Bread.* That is, the poor in Spirit; they shall have the finest of the Wheat; that is, pure Gospel Doctrines; and enjoy them with an especial Blessing. *I will also clothe her Priests, her Ministers, with Salvation, and her Saints shall shout for Joy; from happy and comfortable Experience of the Influences of Heaven upon their Souls.* For where the Gospel comes, it makes that Part of the Earth a Land of Light; all others are Darkness. *Mat. iv. 16. The People that sat in Darkness, saw a great Light; that is, of a clear Gospel Ministry; and to them which sat in the Region and Shadow of Death, Light is sprung up; by the Preaching of the Gospel, as it is explained in the next Words; from that Time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And where the Gospel comes, it is like the dropping of Dew and Rain upon the Plants and Herbs, to make them fruitful, and to turn a barren Wilderness into a fruitful Field. *Deut. xxxii. 2. Hear, O Earth, the Words of my Mouth; for my Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distill as the Dew, as the small Rain upon*

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upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass. So those Parts of the Earth, where the Gospel comes, are like those Parts that have greater Heat of the Sun. *Mal. iv. 2.* There the *Sun of Righteousness* arises, *with Healing in his Wings.* Those that inhabit other Places, are like dead Men; and as living Men do not delight to converse with the dead, so the living God does not delight to converse with those that are in a State of Spiritual Death. In that sense, God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.

(3.) THE *habitable Part of his Earth*, is especially intended of such as are, through Grace, become *the Habitation of God through the Spirit*, *Eph. ii. 22.* And such in whom the Lord Jesus Christ dwells by Faith, *Eph. iii. 17.* Such as dwell in God, and God in them, *I John iv. 13.*

2. THE Lord Jesus Christ rejoiced in this habitable Part of this Earth, from everlasting; before there was an Earth to be inhabited.

(1.) THIS supposes and implies, the Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight that Jesus Christ took in the Settlement of God's eternal Counsel and Covenant, for the Salvation of lost Sinners, by his Obedience in Life and Death, as a Surety for his People, together with the Application of his Purchase to the Souls of those whom the Father had given to him. This necessarily implies the infinite Wisdom and eternal Fore-knowledge of Jesus

Jesus Christ; for when he rejoiced in the habitable Part of the Earth, it was not then made; but he foresaw what the Earth was to be, and who would people the Earth: *The End was known to him from the Beginning: he calls Things that are not, as though they were.* All Creatures and Things are naked and opened to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do. From all Eternity, he saw all the numerous Inhabitants of the World, and who were given to him of the Father. *I know my Sheep,* John x. 14. not only those that have believed on him, but those also that shall believe on him. *Ver. 16. Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold.* I have them, in the Gift and Promise of God, tho' they were not effectually called, no, nor yet born into the World.

(2.) THIS eternal Rejoicing of Jesus Christ in the habitable Part of God's Earth, implies the Readiness of Christ to set himself in the Room and Stead of his People, and stand and act as a Surety for them. He not only complied with the Father's Command, but he undertook it, and went through it with *Pleasure and Delight*; he rejoiced in it. He did not rejoice in it, before-hand, because he was ignorant of what he was to do and suffer; for he knew perfectly what was in the bitter Cup that he was to drink in the Way; that is, what he must undergo from Men, and from the Powers of Hell; and, which was more than all the rest, he knew also what he must suffer

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suffer from the Hand and Sword of divine Justice, and the Wrath of God; but notwithstanding all this, he view'd his Work, from all Eternity, with Delight, and not with Reluctancy; he rejoiced therein, not for the sake of the Sufferings themselves, that could not be; for, as Man, he was Flesh and Blood, as well as we, and must be supposed to love his Life as well as we; but the chief Ground of his eternal Delights with Men, or his rejoicing in the habitable Part of the Earth was,

(3.) IN the Prospect of the blessed Fruits and Effects of his Obedience and Death; the displaying and glorifying all the divine Perfections; magnifying the Law and making it honourable; and conveying Riches of Grace to poor needy Sinners; and bringing them, at last, to eternal Life, to be for ever with him. And so you must understand him when he speaks of his Sufferings, and his desiring of that dreadful Season, *Luke xii. 50. I have a Baptism, a bloody, painful, shameful, cursed Death, to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished. So Luke xxii. 15. With Desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.* Tho' this was just to precede his Sufferings, which were too heavy for all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, yet the View of Sinners Salvation, made him rejoice at the Prospect. O how great was the Love of Jesus Christ to lost Souls! The many Waters of his great Sufferings

ferings did not quench his Love to them ; nor those deep Floods, the Waves and Billows of divine Wrath, did not drown his Love to them. He had the Concerns of their Salvation upon his Heart, with greater Care than for the Preservation of his own natural Life. What the Apostle *Paul* said as a faithful and affectionate Minister, and a dear Lover of precious Souls, the same Jesus Christ could say, as the tender loving Saviour, *Acts* xx. 24. *Neither count I my Life dear unto me, so that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry that I have received of the Lord.*

—By what has been said, it may be fairly gathered, that the Lord Jesus Christ did not take so much delight in the Prospect of the Creation of the World, tho' that was a very curious piece of Skill ; neither did he so much delight in the Creation of the Angels, or in their eternal Services, as he did in the greater Work of Redemption of lost Sinners, and in the View of their eternal Happiness, who were, from everlasting given to him of the Father, that he might purchase their Lives, and all necessary Grace for them ; that he might bring them into his Fold, feed and take care of them ; that he might give them Grace and bring them to Glory. And with triumph say, *Behold here am I, and the Children which thou hast given me, Of those whom thou hast given me, I have lost none.*

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BEFORE I pass on to the second Head, I will drop one Word of Use. If the Lord Jesus Christ delighted in his People from all Eternity, in the Prospect of their Salvation, then all the Redeemed should *rejoice in Christ Jesus*. It is the Character of true Believers; Phil. iii. 3. *We are the Circumcision, in Lips, Ears, and Heart, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh.* I might also shew that Jesus Christ delights in the Persons and Services of Believers; for he beholds them in glorious Robes of his own perfect Righteousness; they are comely, thro' his Comeliness put upon them. Ezek. xvi. 14. *The Church of Believers is all fair*; Cant. vii. 6. *How fair how pleasant art thou, O Love, for Delights?* And Jesus Christ also takes delight in the Services of his People. Thus it is expressed concerning their Prayers. Prov. xv. 8. *The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight.* Even those poor Performances, that, in their own Account, are like *the chattering of a Crane or of a Swallow*, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Even those may be delightful to our Lord Jesus Christ. Cant. ii. 14. *Let me hear thy Voice, let me see thy Face; for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely.* Thus it appears that all the Disciples of Christ should rejoice in him: because he rejoiced in them, even from everlasting; and he does so still, in their Persons and Services: and yet, there are many other Reasons, even without Number, why all Believers should rejoice

rejoice in him. I shall mention a few of them, and so pass on.

[1.] **THAT** they have such a glorious Head; exalted far above all the Angels of Heaven; those Principalities and Powers in the Heavenly Places, are all subject to him; Heaven and Earth are under his Command. He is the Head of Government to all the Creation; but he is the Head of vital Influence to all Believers. Christ is their Life, Col. iii. 4. His Glories, as Mediator, are their Glories; his Conquests theirs; and his Life as their Head, secures their spiritual and eternal Life. John xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

[2.] Because they have him for the Lord their Righteousness; they are comely in the Sight of God, thro' his Comeliness put upon them. This alone gives them Acceptance with God; this gives them a Title to eternal Life. By the Suretyship-Righteousness of Christ, the Believer obtains the Pardon of Sin. In this they rejoice and glory. Isai. xlv. 25. *In the Lord shall all the [spiritual] Seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

[3.] Believers may well rejoice in Christ Jesus; for they have in him a full Fountain and Treasury of Grace; overflowing to all his needy Disciples and Followers; from whose Fulness, all the People of God have received their Supplies, in every Age, from the Beginning of the World, even to this Day. John i. 16. *Of his Fulness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.*

E

[4.] **THEY**

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[4.] THEY have, in Jesus Christ, a tender, faithful, loving, constant Friend. He is a *Friend at all Times*; Believers have found him so, Cant. 5. 16. *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.* O what a Friend was that who undertook to pay their Debts; to lay down his Life for them, that they might live for ever! And he is unchangeable in his Love, and Friendship; *He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* As he is in himself, so he is in his Love and Friendship, and all his Gifts of Grace.

[5.] BELIEVERS should rejoice in Jesus Christ; as they have such an Advocate with the Father; to plead their Cause for them, 1 John ii. 1. *If any Man sin, thro' Infirmary, unwillingly, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He ever lives, in Heaven, to make Intercession for them that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25. to plead for all necessary Grace; and for Glory itself, John xvii. 24. Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me, where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me.* Therefore must be his Glory as Mediator; because it was given him; for nothing could be given to him or received by him as God.

[6.] THE Disciples of Christ may well rejoice in Christ Jesus, as he is their tender, careful Shepherd; to watch over them Day and Night; to lead and feed them. He has charged all the under Shepherds to do so;

John

John xxi. 15, 16, 17. *Feed my Sheep, feed my Lambs.* Acts xx. 28. *Take heed to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers; to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* But he himself is the chief Shepherd, and will take Care of them all. Ps. lxxx. 1. *He is the Shepherd of Israel, he that leadeth Joseph, all his own Sheep, like a Flock.* And as his Love is as large as his Power, they can never want. Psal. xxiii. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*

[7.] BELIEVERS may well rejoice in Christ Jesus; for he is such a Physician as can infallibly heal all the Diseases of his People. He perfectly knows all their Afflictions, with the Grounds and Occasions thereof; and he is willing to undertake the Cure of all that put themselves into his Hands: And he is most Successful; none ever fail'd of Cure, that committed themselves to him for healing. *Matth. xii. 15.* Whatever their Diseases were, in the Days of his Ministry upon Earth, *he healed them all.* And he does all gratis, or for nothing. He only expects that healed Souls should return to give Glory to God, by their Thanks and Praises; and by their obedient Lives. And surely that's but a reasonable Service, for all that he has done for them.—These Things, now mention'd, are some of the Reasons, why all the Disciples of Christ should rejoice in him.—But in order thereto, it is necessary that they

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should give all Diligence, to make out their
Interest in him.

Secondly. The Delights of Jesus Christ, from all Eternity, were with the Sons of Men. These two Terms, the *habitable Part* of his Earth, and *the Sons of Men*, are the same Thing: though, as I observed before, with some Distinction; even as Men may look with some Pleasure, on many Things in the World; yet it is Interest and Propriety, in any Thing, that gives the greatest Delight. If there is any Thing, which, in itself is good, valuable and suitable, and, at the same Time, we can add this one Thought, to the rest, that it is mine; that heightens our Delight in the Thing—And now I shall endeavour to shew upon what Accounts, the Lord Jesus Christ took his Delights with the Sons of Men, from Everlasting.

I. THIS occasion'd Delight and Pleasure to Jesus Christ; in that he knew, that by standing as a Surety for his People, and bearing their Guilt and Punishment; he should also *bear away their Sins*. He knew, by the Conditions of the Covenant of Redemption, that *the Iniquities of his People* were to meet upon him, by Imputation; as the Sins of the People, under the Law, were *confess'd over the Head* of the Victim, or Creature to be slain; and, thus, there was a typical Transferring the Sins of the Person to the Sacrifice.

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face. *Lev. xvi. 21.* So God the Father made the Sins of all his People to meet upon Christ. *Isa. liii. 6.* *The Lord laid upon him the Iniquity of us all.* And then the Surety must answer, to the Justice of God, for their Sins, whom he stood for, and must undergo the Punishment which was due to them for Sin. He must lye under the Curse and Wrath of God, for a while, that they might be saved from the Wrath to come, *1 Theff. i. 10.* *Even Jesus, who hath delivered us from the Wrath to come.* As for the Eternity of the Miseries of those that perish, that's occasion'd for want of Satisfaction of the Creditor; for if Satisfaction was made the same Day that a Man was cast into Prison, the Creditor and Jaylor have nothing to do to hold that Man any longer: But a Man remains Prisoner all his Life, because his Debts remain unpaid; for it is not the Punishment of a Man's lying in Prison, that pays his Debts; tho that's an Affliction to the Debtor, yet it is no Part of Payment. Lost Souls lie in Prison for ever, because their deserved Misery pays no Debts. But J:esus Christ could not lie, eternally, under the Wrath of God, because he paid, to the very last Mite, all the Debt that was owing to the Justice of God. Jesus Christ knew, from everlasting, what it would cost him to stand in the Place of a Surety. *Prov. xi. 15.* *He that will be Surety for another, shall smart for it.* Many a Man has done so; but none like the Lord Jesus Christ. When

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one Man has smarted for being Surety for another, he did not intend to bring himself into such Inconveniency; but Jesus Christ knew what it would cost him, to stand in the Room of Sinners; yet he not only consented to it; but undertook it chearfully; and tho his Sufferings were inexpressible, yet he *endured the Cross and despised the Shame*, Heb. xii. 2. It is not said, that he despised the Curse and the Wrath of God: O that was dreadful! That made him *sweat great Drops of Blood, falling to the Ground*. But he even despised the Shame and Pain of the Cross, in Comparison of what Glory he should bring to God; and how many Sons he should bring to Glory, by his being *made perfect thro' Suffering*. Thus it appears, that Jesus Christ prefer'd the eternal Salvation of his People, in Soul and Body, before his own natural Life. He shed his own precious Blood, to cleanse and heal and save their Souls.

This sets forth the Love, both of the Father and the Son; the Love of God the Father, in his Gift of Jesus Christ for us; *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John iv. 10. Job was sensible of his Need of another to answer for him; therefore he prays, Job. xvii. 3. *Put me in a Surety with thee*; And God the Father did so for all his People. Heb. vii. 22. *By so much was Jesus made the Surety of a better Testament*. And Christ's ready and chear-
ful

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ful Acceptance of this kind Office, shews that *his Love passeth Knowledge.* Eph. iii. 19; *Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends,* John xv. 13. But Jesus Christ dyed for his *Enemies*; for *Sinners*; for *the Ungodly,* Rom. x. 6, 8, 10. What Concern should you and I have, upon our Souls, to make out our particular Interest in the Death of Jesus Christ, that we may say with the Apostle, Gal. ii. 20, *The Life that I live in the Flesh, is by the Faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.* If you would take the Comfort of the latter Words; you should endeavour to make out the former; that is, that the Life you now live in the Flesh, is by the Faith of the Son of God.

2. THE Delights of our Lord Jesus Christ were with the Sons of Men, from everlasting; from this Consideration, that in saving his People, thro' his Obedience, in Life and Death, *all the divine Perfections would be more remarkably display'd and glorified, than in all other Works of God,* more than in the Work of Creation, and all the wonderful Conduct of divine Providence, towards his People, from the Beginning to the End of the World. Many of the Perfections of God were display'd in these two; but more in the greater Work of Redemption.

(1.) The infinite *Wisdom of God* was display'd in finding out such a Way of Salvation for lost Sinners, wherein the infinite Ju-

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Justice of God would lose nothing; but be entirely satisfied; and the holy, broken Law of God would be magnified and made honourable; even by the Obedience and Death of Jesus Christ, who was God-man. On the Account of his Suretyship-Righteousness, *God can be just, and the Justifier of every one that believes in Jesus Christ.* Rom. iii. 26. In him, *Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other,* Psal. lxxxv. 10. There is a glorious Harmony in all the divine Attributes; they are entirely reconciled in God's Way of Justification and Salvation of Sinners, thro' Faith in Christ and his Righteousness. In this Way of Salvation, divine Justice is entirely satisfied; and the holy Law of God loses nothing; it is not desired to make the least Abatement: Nay, more than that, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Surety, brought to the holy Law of God, such Obedience as the Law could not lay Claim unto; that is the Obedience of God-Man, in the same Person; for tho' the Law could lay Claim to the best of his Obedience as Man; being made under the Law; yet it could not demand his Obedience as God-Man. Tho' Jesus Christ as God, was not under the Law, neither could the Godhead obey or die; but his human Soul and Body were all of his Person that could obey or suffer; yet the Obedience of Christ, our Surety, in Life and Death, being paid in the Person of the Son of God; that Union of the human Nature

with

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with his divine Person, gave infinite Value to his Obedience and Death ; and made it meritorious ; it was more than the holy spiritual Law could demand of him, as the Surety, in the Room and stead of his People. And thus Mercy and Truth are met together, but tho' the Mercy of God has now it full Scope, in pardoning and saving of every true Believer ; yet it cannot be truly said, *that Mercy triumphs over Justice* ; it is an Unscriptural, and an unguarded Expression ; but we may say Justice and Mercy are intirely agreed ; and both display'd and glorified in the Salvation of every Believer. Pardon of Sin thro' Jesus Christ and his Righteousness, is an Act of Justice as well as of Mercy. Rom. iii. 26. *To declare, I say at this Time, his Righteousness, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him, which believeth in Jesus.* 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins.* It is just with Regard to Jesus Christ, but Mercy and Grace, with Respect to us. God's Justice now being intirely satisfied, and having received its full Demands, at the Hands of the Surety, can say, of every believing Sinner, as you have the Expression, concerning the repenting, sick Man, Job. xxxiii. 24. *Deliver him from going down to the Pit ; I have found a Ransom for him.* That is, the Price of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ ; or, which is the same, his Obedience in Life and Death. And that is it, which makes up the justifying Righteousness

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of every true Believer. And that's the same which is called *the Righteousness of God*: because it was of God's providing; and because he was very God, that wrought it out and brought it in; and it is called the Righteousness of Faith; because it becomes ours thro' Faith in Jesus Christ. And God is said to find this Ransom, because it was found out by infinite *Wisdom*; and it is true of the Justice of God also, as he *accepted* of it, in the Room of Sinners; and God finds it, as *believing Sinners bring* that perfect Righteousness to the Justice of God, in their Room and Stead, to answer for them.

(2.) The infinite Holiness of God is also display'd and glorified by the Obedience and Death of Jesus Christ, our Surety, who stood charged with the Guilt of the Sins of his People. Tho' both in his Nature and Life, he was the Holy-one of God; and in his Death, he was *the Lamb of God without Blemish and without Spot*, 1 Pet. i. 19. Yet the Holy God shew'd his Hatred of Sin, when it was found upon Jesus Christ, only by Imputation. Even then it is said of God, Rom. viii. 32. *God spared not his own Son*. He did not spare him, so as to withhold him from us; *but deliver'd him up for us all*. And he did not spare him; so as to abate him the least Degree of the Punishment due to us for Sin. He pour'd out all the Vials of his Wrath upon him; he made all the Waves and the Billows to go over his Soul. O that every impenitent

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tent Sinner would seriously consider it, and be afraid of Sin! Did not God spare his own, eternal, and dear Son, when he stood as a Surety for others; then take Head to thyself, lest he spare not thee? As the Lord liveth, if thou continuest in thy allowed Practice of Sin, he will not spare thee. *If these things were done in the green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If God's Justice and Holiness dealt thus with his dear Son, that never transgress'd his Commandments, at any Time, but always did those things that pleased him, what will he do with his Enemies? *where shall the Sinner and the Ungodly appear?* Where? They must all appear before the awful Tribunal of the impartial Judge of all the Earth. And then it will appear what thou hast done; how thou hast lived; what Company thou hast chosen, whilst thou hadst bid God depart from thee, not desiring the Knowledge of his Ways. Then it will appear, what Warnings thou hast sinn'd against; what Goodness thou hast abused; and what base Lusts thou hast loved, obeyed and se ved; what Convictions thou hast stifled; and what a Slight thou hast put upon the Word and Ordinances of Christ. As God is true, he will deal with impenitent Sinners, according to their Works. *Wo to the Wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him.* But God has said, that *it shall go well with the Righteous.* They shall be found in Christ; the Judge shall be their Friend;

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Friend ; he will openly own and acquit them in the Day of Judgment. He will pronounce them *good and faithful Servants*, and call them *to enter into the Joy of their Lord*. And, in Prospect of this eternal Blessedness, they are bid to lift up their Heads. —

(3) THE infinite Truth and Faithfulness of God was display'd and glorified in the Obedience and Death of Jesus Christ, as our Surety. It was said to Man, in the Threatning, Gen. ii. 17. *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, and by breaking the Law of God, Man became liable to natural and eternal Death, and spiritual Death also came in by Sin. And as Jesus Christ stood as the Surety for his People, so he must die for them, that he might save them from spiritual and eternal Death ; but he does not save them from natural Death : yet Jesus Christ having paid the Debts of his People, and purchased their Lives, by the great Price of his precious Blood, they shall not die eternally. Rom. viii. 10. *The Body is dead, it is become Mortal, because of Sin*. When Sin came into the World, Death came in with it ; but tho' all must die a natural Death ; yet *the Spirit is Life*, the Soul shall live for ever, *because of Righteousness* ; that is the perfect Righteousness of Jesus Christ our Surety, which becomes ours by Faith : therefore, *be that believeth in Christ, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live*.

(4) THE tender Mercy, Grace and Compassion of God is display'd and glorified in

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our Lord Jesus Christ, towards the unworthy and Miserable Sons of Men, Tit. iii. 5. *By his Mercy he saved us; but not by infinite Mercy, without satisfaction to divine Justice; but it is Mercy, as it is Favour intended to us, consider'd in ourselves by the Fall miserable Creatures.* So it is said, that we are saved by Grace; Eph. ii. 8. *By Grace are ye saved thro' Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.* Our Redemption and Salvation was dearly bought by our Surety, Jesus Christ, even by his precious Blood; but it is a free Gift to all the Children of Men; so is Jesus Christ himself, and so are all his Benefits. Eph. i. 7. *We have Redemption thro' his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.*

THAT's the second Head, in answer to the Enquiry, what are the Grounds of Christ's Delights with the Sons of Men from Everlasting?

3. THE Delights of Jesus Christ with the Sons of Men from everlasting, proceeded from the pleasing Prospect that he had, of their being United to himself by Faith; that he should be their Head of Vital Influence, as well as of Government, and that they were to be his living Members. He should be the true Vine, and that they shou'd be the living fruitful Branches in him. John xxv. 1. He delighted in their Persons, as he beheld them standing in all the most endearing Relations to himself, and he to them, Matt. xii.

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50. *Whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother and Siſter and Mother.* They are as the Apple of the Eye. *Zech. ii. 8. He that toucheth you in a Way of Perſecution and Hatred, toucheth the Apple of my Eye.* When Jeſus Chriſt delighted in the Sons of Men from Everlaſting, it ſuppoſes his View of his Intereſt in them; not conſider'd as their Creator or Preſerver; for ſo he was and is of all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth; and of one as well as another. But he conſider'd himſelf as the Head and Redeemer of all that the Father had choſen in him before the Foundation of the World. *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath choſen us in himſelf before the Foundation of the World.* And ſo they were Chriſt's, by the Gift of the Father. *John xxvii. 6, 10. Thus he ſpeaks to the Father; thine they were, and thou gav'eſt them me.* He delighted in them, as he was to have them for his own, taken out from among others, to be his ſpiritual Seed, according to the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and him. *Iſai. liii. 10. Yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruife him, he hath put him to Grief; when thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, he ſhall prolong his Days, and the Pleaſure of the Lord, that is the Calling, Conversion, and Salvation of Sinners, ſhall proſper in his Hands.* And Jeſus Chriſt conſider'd them as thoſe whom he was to purchaſe with a Price. He was to give his Life a Ransom for many; that is for

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his Sheep; John x. 15. *I lay down my Life for the Sheep.* Moreover, they are Christ's by their own Choice of him; they receive him, and rest upon him; they give up themselves to him, they own him for their Lord; they submit themselves to his Government, and to his Righteousness; they take hold of his Covenant; and bind themselves to be the Lord's. Psal. cxvi. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant and the Son of thy Handmaid, thou hast loosed my Bonds.* Isai. xxvi. 13. *O Lord, our God, other Lords besides thee have had Dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name.*

4. THE Delights of Jesus Christ with the Sons of Men from everlasting, were in the Prospect he took of the Riches of Grace that he was to convey to their Souls. We have a Hint of this in the Context; Ver. 18 *Riches and Honours are with me; yea, durable Riches and Righteousness.* The Riches and Honours of this World, are at the intire Disposall of Jesus Christ, as the Prince of the Kings of the Earth; all the Kingdoms of the World are his, and he gives them to whom he will. But these are not the Riches and Honours that he intends in the Text last mention'd; but the true Riches; or the Grace of God in Truth; and *the Honours that come from God only.* Not such as make to themselves Wings and fly away as an Eagle; but durable Riches; the Graces of the Spirit of God in the Soul. And that Righteousness,
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by which every true Believer is clothed and adorned; that's an everlasting Righteousness; which is unto all and upon all them that believe; thus believing Souls are comely thro' his Comeliness put upon them. And the Righteousness of Sanctification, to cleanse and heal them, and conform them to the Image of Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 29. And make them meet for the Service and Enjoyment of God, both here and in Heaven. This is another Ground of Christ's delighting in his People from Everlasting; His beholding his own Image of Grace and Holiness upon them. When he had finished his Works, in the first Creation, he survey'd what he had made, and he beheld all very Good; he took Pleasure, Satisfaction and Delight in the wonderful Product of his infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power both in Heaven and Earth. And truly all things were done to Perfection, and very worthy of a God; nothing needs to be added to it, or any way alter'd, to render it more comely or useful. How widely differing is this from the Works of the Wisest of Men! When they have invented a most curious Piece of Workmanship, admired by all ingenious Men; yet he that made it, or some other Man may see Reason to alter it, and mend many Parts of it. But ever since the Creation of the World, tho' it has stood these many thousand Years, and wise Men have had Time, one upon the Shoulders of another

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another, to study the several Parts of the Works of Jesus Christ, in the Formation of all in Heaven and Earth; yet no Alterations can be reasonably proposed, wherein to mend the Works of God. But let the first Creation be what it will; the Lord Jesus Christ took more Delight from Everlasting, in the Prospect of the second Creation; that is, in his Work of Grace and Holiness on the Souls of the Sons of Men; and in the Exercise and Increase of their Graces: for Jesus Christ knew himself to be both the Author and Finisher of it. Jesus Christ has no where said such things of the first Creation, as he has done of the new. He calls the Redeemed his Portion, his Treasure, his Vineyard, his Inheritance and his Jewels; all which Expressions shew his Delights are in them.

5. THE Lord Jesus Christ delighted in the Sons of Men from Everlasting, in the Prospect of their sincere Services done in Faith and Love. Tho' he did not choose them for their Faith, or Love, or good Works foreseen; yet he delighted in the fore-View of what he would work in them, and what he would assist them to do. They serve him so poorly, that they are often ashamed of their own Doings; yet, as they are done in Faith and in his Name, he delights in them.

6. JESUS Christ delighted in the Sons of Men from Everlasting, in the Prospect of his acting towards them, as the Prophet of his Church, to teach them the Mind and Will
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of God for their Salvation, which they will need as long as they are on Earth. An Intimation of this we have in the Context; Ver. 20. *I lead in the Way of Righteousness.* This is delightful Work to Jesus Christ; we are inform'd, that when he found any that were taught of the Lord, he express'd his Pleasure both for the thing itself, and for the Ground of it. Matt. xi. 25. *In the same Hour, Jesus rejoiced in Spirit and said; I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them to Babes; even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight.* And our Text implies that the very Prospect of it afforded great Delight to our Lord Jesus Christ, from everlasting. It is the Office of Jesus Christ to teach and lead his People; and by his Word and Spirit, he will lead them into all Truth; and keep them from fatal Errors; and to lead in the *Paths of Righteousness*, and so keep them from the Paths of Sin, and of the Destroyer. There is a Necessity of his teaching and leading; for it is *not in Man, that walketh to direct his Steps.* Besides the new Creature, tho' it is taught of the Lord, yet is but partly enlightened; *we know but in Part;* therefore shall still have need to pray as Job. *what I see not, teach thou me.* See how David prays for it, Psal. xxv. 4. *Shew me thy Ways O Lord; teach me thy Paths.* Ver. 5. *Lead me in thy Truth and teach me: for thou art the God of my Salvation.* Sometimes their Path may

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may be doubtful, and then they need *Teaching*; and sometimes their Path may be rough and troublesome, and then they need *Leading*; therefore he pray'd for both. But when Jesus Christ has said, *I lead in the Way of Righteousness*; three Things are intended in it.

(1.) His shewing them God's only Way of justifying of a Sinner, or wherein God can be just, and the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus. That it is not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but by his Mercy and Grace, thro' the perfect Righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, wrought by him as our Surety, and apprehended by Faith. When the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Prophet, shews the Sinner this Way of Pardon of Sin, and of Acceptance with God, and of obtaining eternal Life; and also, as King, brings the Soul to consent unto this Way of Salvation; then is Jesus Christ said to lead in the Way of Righteousness.

(2.) Or his leading in the Way of Righteousness, may be intended of his instructing them in the Mystery of Sanctification; Not only to shew the Necessity of it; for *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*; but also to instruct them in the only Way of obtaining it; which is a Mystery to the greatest Part of Mankind; some take it to be only Reformation of Life or Manners; Or to consist of Morality; or to be kind Neighbours; or to keep from gross Sins: But that Holiness

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ness which is necessary to Salvation, consists in the Restoration of the Image of God on the Soul; Consisting in Righteousness and true Holiness; it is turning the Soul from the Love to the hated Sin; and from an Aversion to Holiness, to esteem it highly; and to long and pray and labour after it.

(3.) To lead in the Way of Righteousness, is also to dispose the Soul to imitate his Example; as he has shewn us how we should walk and please God. That we may delight in the Law of God, after the inward Man. And may count it our Meat and Drink to do his Will.

7. JESUS CHRIST delighted in the Prospect that he had from Everlasting, of his People being all brought home to Glory, to be forever with him. It was with this View that he took on him their Nature; bore their Sins; laid down his Life; and now lives in Heaven to make Intercession for them: He did so when on Earth, and particularly that they might be all brought safe to Heaven. John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, or where I shall be for ever, that they may behold my Glory.* And with this View, he gives them his Spirit and his Grace, as the Earnest and Seal of Heaven, and the Things that accompany Salvation. He conforms them now to his own Image; and makes them meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. And he designs to come again,

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gain and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also, John 14. 3. This Honour and Happiness is design'd for all the Children of God. 1 John 3. 2. Now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.

Thus I have finished the doctrinal Part of our Text, explaining the several Branches of it; The Uses must be defered to the next Sermon.



SER-



S E R M O N IV.

Prov. viii. 31.

My Delights were with the Sons of Men.

HAVING finished the doctrinal Part of the Text; there are two Things that I design to do, with the divine Permission, by Way of Application. (1.) To draw some natural Inferences from the Truths which have been spoken to: And (2.) To take particular Notice of such Uses and Application as the *personal Wisdom of God* himself makes of the Doctrines contain'd in the Text; which we can, by no Means overlook.

—Did our Lord Jesus Christ delight in the Sons of Men, from everlasting? Then we infer,

1. That the Love of Jesus Christ to his People was *an everlasting Love*, and all the Grace that Men receive from the Fulness of Jesus Christ, in Time, are the Fruits of his everlasting Love: So it is said of effectual Calling,

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Calling, or of divine drawing of Souls to close with Jesus Christ. Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with everlasting Love; therefore with Loving Kindness have I drawn thee, that is,*

(1.) I have drawn thee off from thy Love to, and Custom in Sin, and inclin'd thy Soul to cast away thy Idols of Sin. And I have drawn thee to God by sincere Repentance, to forsake and hate all known Sin, and even to loath yourselves in your own Sight, for all the Evils that you have done; *Ezek. xx. 43.* This is God's turning the Soul to himself. Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.*

(2.) I have drawn thee to close with Jesus Christ, by Faith, and to give up thy Soul to him, and to take hold of the Covenant. *Isa. lvi. 4, 6.* To choose God in Christ for thy God and Portion; and to choose the good Part that shall never be taken away, *Luke x. 42.*

(3.) I have drawn thee to the Love and Practice of Godliness. This is the Drawing that Believers themselves still pray for, and so will have Need as long as they live. *Cant. i. 4.* *Draw me, I will run after thee.* Where there is the Grace of God in Truth, there will be need of new Influences from Heaven, in the Way of Duty.

2. If the Love and Delights of Jesus Christ were in his People from Everlasting; then his Love must needs be towards us, before ours could possibly be towards him. Ours is in Time,
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his was from Everlasting. So it is said of the Love of God the Father. 1 John iv. 10. *Not that we loved God, but that he loved us,* that is, that he loved us first, and sent his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins. And so it is affirmed of the Love of Jesus Christ also. Ver. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.* His Love induced him to take our Nature, to bear our Guilt, to suffer and die for us before we could love him: for he died for Enemies, not for his Friends. Rom. v. 6. *Christ died for the Ungodly;* not for those that loved him, but for Sinners. Jesus Christ was moved by his own Love, not from the Love or Loveliness of Men, to give his Life for them. Gal. ii. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* There are a great many Things that Jesus Christ must do for Men, as Fruits of his Love, before they can possibly love him. He must give them his Spirit, he must call them effectually, by his Grace, he must work Faith in their Hearts: for till he exerts these preventing Acts of his Love and Grace, it is not possible they should have a Spark of sincere Love to him; therefore his Love is first, and pitch'd on the Soul, without any other Motive, but his own meer good Pleasure.

3. If the Love of Jesus Christ to his People was from Everlasting, then *his Love is unchangeable;* it will endure for ever. So much seems to be imply'd in that Expression, John xiii. 1. *Having loved his own that were*
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in the World, he loved them to the End. We may quickly lose the Love of our Fellow Creatures; for they and We are changeable. Perhaps, for a while, they can't tell how to live easy out of your Company; but in a little while, they may little care for it, much less desire it: but as Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever, as to his Person and divine Perfections; so he is in his Purposes, his Promises and Love.

(1.) DISTANCE of Place makes no Change in the Love of Christ. He was in Heaven when he pitch'd his Love upon the Sons of Men. Tho' he is now in Heaven, receiving the Homages of Saints and Angels; and his People here upon Earth; yet he has the same Love to them, at that great Distance, as ever he had. It is too common with Acquaintance here, on Earth, according to the Proverb, *Out of Sight, out of Mind*; but it is not so with Jesus Christ; he bears his People upon his Heart, he has *graven them upon the Palms of his Hand*, Isa. xlix. 16.

(2.) DISTANCE of Time makes no Alteration in the Love of Christ to his People. He loved them before they had a Being; and tho' a thousand Ages pass, and Creatures change with the Times, yet Christ and his Love, which were before all Time, are and ever will be the same. 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *Charity never fails*, that is, true Love never fails. If this Assertion holds good, with regard to the sincere Love of Christians one towards

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another;

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another; how much more, when applied to the Love of Jesus Christ, towards them. But instead of neglecting ~~under~~ their Afflictions, his Love inclines him to ply them and to bear their Burdens. And he directs them to cast their Burden upon him, by Faith and Prayer; and has promised to uphold them. *Isaiah* iv. 22. *Cast thy Burden upon the Lord; whether it be of Care or Fear, of Pain or Sickness, of Losses or Disappointments; if the Burden be too heavy for thee, and thy weak Grace, cast all thy Burdens and Care upon him, and he shall sustain thee.* Or, if his People are to be changed from Life to Death, and from Time to Eternity; that makes no Alteration in the Love of Christ. *Rom. viii. 38. I am persuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

(3.) All the present unworthy Carriage of the Disciples of Christ, will not quench his Love towards them. *Cant. viii. 7. Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it.* O how many Provocations are found with the People of God, even after they have tasted and experienced some of the Fruits of everlasting Love! O how little Faith! how much Unbelief! how Unthankful for Mercies! how forgetful of the repeated Kindnesses of God to them! how uneasy

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easy under Afflictions ! How little good Fruit have they brought forth, to the Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ, and the Service of Souls ! But the Love of Christ is, like himself, unchangeable. And it is well for the best of Christians, that it is so, *Mal. iii. 6. I the Lord change not ; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed.* But why is it not said, therefore you open Sinners ; you prophane, wicked Livers are not consumed. But it is true even of the Spiritual, as well as the fleshly Seed of Jacob. O ye Sons of Jacob, there's enough in you, if God should be strict to mark Iniquity, to cast you out of his Favour. But tho' he will surely shew his Dislike of their Sins ; yet he will keep his Love and his Covenant Engagements with them ; even as a loving Father may chastise his Children smartly, for their Faults ; yet not disinherit them. God has said as much ; *Psal. lxxxix. 30, 34. If his Children, Solomon, in the Letter, but Jesus Christ in the Spirit and Substance ; If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments ; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their Transgression with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes, nevertheless my Loving-Kindness, will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail ; my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips : that is the Promises of God.* This Portion of Scripture affords just Ground of Comfort to

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every sincere Christian, who tho' they do not live without their Slips, and unwilling Faults and Failings, yet they carefully endeavour to abstain from all Appearance of Evil. Tho' for their Faults, they may justly expect his fatherly Chastisement, that he may testify his Hatred of Sin; yet he will not break his Covenant and Promise with his People. But this Text of Scripture affords no manner of Encouragement to Men of licentious Principles and Practices, who will take a lawless Liberty to sin, because the Grace of God has abounded; and abuse the Doctrine of Free-Grace to excuse their Sins, and to keep their guilty Consciences quiet. But those that espouse the Doctrines of Grace, with no better Design, than to cover their licentious Lives, never knew the Grace of God in Truth: For both the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the Grace of the Gospel, *teach us that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present evil World, as those that are regularly looking for that blessed Hope and glorious Appearing of the great God, and [or even] our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Tit. ii. 11. 12. Let us endeavour to have these things impress'd upon our Minds, the Constancy and Freeness of the Love of Christ to us; that it was without any Motive in the Creature; not for any Good foreseen; for they were blind, deaf, deformed, guilty, unclean, naked, poor, cursed, condemned, Enemies, Rebels, unprofitable,

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unprofitable, prone to all Evil, averse to all Good. O how wonderful is it, that Jesus Christ should pitch his Love on such as these, and that his Delights should be with the Sons of Men ; when he knew they had nothing agreeable in them, but what he himself must work in them and give to them ! If they become good, 'tis he must make them so. They have nothing good, but what they derive from him ; and they can do nothing good, but as he assists them, and works all their Works in them and for them. O how rich and free is the Grace of God to fallen Man ! This should constrain the Receiver to Love, Thankfulness and Holiness.

4. We infer from hence, also, that *the greatest Honour that Jesus Christ can do to Men upon Earth, is, to delight in them ;* this is the highest Pitch of Love ; this Honour have all the Saints ; this is the Happiness of true Believers, God in Christ can say to them ; as God said to Israel ; Isa. lxii. 4. *Thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah ; that is, my Delights are in thee.* The Delights of Jesus Christ, in his People, implies such things as these ;

(1.) His Interest in them. One Man may admire another's Estate or House, &c. but he delights most in his own. There are some of the Sons of Men, who, above all the Earth besides, are Jesus Christ's, upon many Accounts ; as they *were chosen* in him, before the Foundation of the World ; as they were *the Gift* of the Father to him ; and as he *pur-*

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chased them ; and as they have given up themselves to him ; these are his own, not as Creator or Preserver, but as *Redeemer* and Saviour of the lost Sheep. These are the Delight of Jesus Christ.

(2.) THE Delight of Jesus Christ in his People, implies, his continual Remembrance of them. He bears them upon his Heart ; he has engraven them upon the Palms of his Hands. Tho' thro' the Weakness of Grace they may sometimes fear, that the Lord has forsaken and forgotten them, yet the Love of Christ is not to be measured by their mistaken Thoughts of him.

(3.) THIS Delight of Jesus Christ in his People, implies his Readiness to bestow his best Favours upon them. *Esth. vi. 6. What shall be done to the Man whom the King delighteth to honour ?* So it may be said of the happy Souls, in whom Jesus Christ, the King of Kings delighteth. These are espoused to Christ ; he is their Lord, their Head and Husband ; He loves them as his own Life ; what then will he, what can he withhold from them ? He says to his People, as the King did to *Esther*, what is thy Petition, what is thy Request ? Ask and it shall be given thee, even to the Half of my Kingdom. *Ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.*

(4.) THE Delight of Jesus Christ, in his People, implies, some suitableness that he beholds in them, to himself, thro' his Grace wrought in their Hearts : for there can be no
Delight

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Delight without Agreeableness. *Amos iii. 3.*
Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
What Communion hath Light with Darkness;
between the holy God, and unholy Crea-
tures? The Lord Jesus Christ delights in
such as bear his own Image; such as are sin-
cere with God; *Prov. xi. 20.* *Such as are*
upright in their Way are his Delight; such as
hate Sin, and love Holiness; that delight in
the Law of God; that make the Service of
God their Meat and Drink; tho' their Ser-
vice may be but mean and imperfect; yet
Jesus Christ delights therein. *Prov. xv. 8.*
The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight.

5. THEY are the most happy Souls upon
Earth that sincerely seek the Lord Jesus Christ:
for such are interested in his special Love and
Delights. Their seeking him is but a Fruit,
in Time, flowing from his eternal Love to,
and Delights in them. And herein lies the
Happiness of such Souls; that they are also in-
terested in the Purchase of Christ, in the Bles-
sings of the New Covenant, and the great and
precious Promises and eternal Life itself. This
Matter is evident, by comparing two Verses of
our Context, *Vier. 17,* with *35.* *I love them*
that love me, and those that seek me early shall
find me. He that findeth me findeth Life, and
shall obtain Favour of the Lord. That is the
blessed Fruits of the Eternal Love and De-
lights of Jesus Christ. The Way to obtain
the Estate, is to seek an Interest in the Per-
son.

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There are four things, either express'd or imply'd in those Verses.

(1.) THAT such as know the Necessary, Worth and Suitableness of Jesus Christ, to the Condition of their Souls, will seek him in order to find him. They will seek him as a Prophet to teach them the Will of God ; what they are to believe and what to do, in order to Salvation ; and as a Priest to sanctify and cleanse them ; and as a King, to rule over them, and to subdue their Iniquities, and give them Victory over their Enemies ; that they may be more than Conquerors, thro' him that has loved them ; and they seek him as a Physician to heal them ; and as a Treasury, to supply them with all necessary Grace: for none can come to Jesus Christ as full Souls, but poor and needy ; not as righteous, but unrighteous ; not as holy, but unholy ; not as comely, but uncomely and deformed.

(2.) AMONG the many that hear of Jesus Christ, by the Gospel, there are some that find him. We read in Scripture of Souls finding of Christ, *without searching after him* ; that is, thro' the preventing Grace of God. *Isai. lxx. 1. I am found of them that sought me not.* It is true of every Soul, as to the first Work of Grace in their Hearts. But this is more properly Christ's finding us, than our finding him. God is not only ready to hear the Prayers of those that seek him, but
some-

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sometimes has said, as Ver. 24. *Before they call, I will answer.* God must exert some Acts of Grace, before the Soul can seek after him. *Psal. lxxx. 18. Quicken us, and we will call upon thy Name.* There is a Necessity in all Men, by Nature, of that quickening, which is bringing the Soul from Death to Life; and also of that quickening, even in Believers themselves, which is drawing out Grace to its Exercise. Our Acquaintance with God, begins on God's side; as it is said. *1 John iv. 19. We love him, because he first loved us;* and we seek him, because he first sought us; we choose him, because he first chose us; and we come to him, because he drew us, with the Cords of his Love. Therefore, where any Soul is sincerely seeking and breathing after God and Jesus Christ, such are the happy Objects of the Love and Delights of Christ. But there is, also, a finding of Jesus Christ upon diligent Search after him; this is God's appointed Way for us, in order to find him. *Jer. xxix. 13. Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye search for me with all your Heart.*

(3.) WHEN may it be said that any Soul has found Jesus Christ? Some poor humble Souls may be sincerely seeking after Jesus Christ, who cannot make it out; that they have found him. These heartily breath after his gracious Presence, as *Job xxiii. 3. O that I knew where I might find him.* But how shall a poor doubting Soul know whether it has found Je-

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Jesus Christ or no? I shall answer this in a few
Particulars.

[1.] THAT Soul has already found the
Lord Jesus Christ, that now sincerely seeks
him; not coldly, formally, carelessly, but
earnestly; or with the whole Heart. *Psal.*
cxix. 10. With my whole Heart have I sought
thee. Now, pray observe, I do not say that
such shall find him; but that they have al-
ready found him. It will not hold good, in
Matters of this World; we cannot say, that
such as carefully seek any thing, have alrea-
dy found what they seek after; but it will hold
true, in the Soul's seeking after God, Jesus
Christ and his Grace; those that seek sincere-
ly have found them.

[2.] THEY have already found Jesus
Christ, that are willing to part with all for
him: This is ever the Way of Grace with
Men. *Matt. xiii. 45, 46. The Kingdom of*
Heaven is like unto a Merchant-Man, seeking
goodly Pearls, who, when he had found one
Pearl of great Price, he went and sold all that
he had, and bought it. This Parable is intend-
ed to set forth a Soul made willing to come
up to God's Terms of Salvation; to put
away all known Sin, and to quit all Trust in
Self-Righteousness, and rest alone on the
Righteousness of Jesus Christ for Salvation.
Phil. iii. 8, 9. And do count all things but Loss
for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord, and be found in him not having
my own Righteousness, which is of the Law,
but

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but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, even the Righteousness of God by Faith. And most heartily to submit to the Government of Christ; that Soul has already found Jesus Christ. *Isai. xxvi. 13. O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee, have had Dominion over us; but by thee, will we make mention of thy Name.*

[3.] THEY have already found Jesus Christ that cannot be satisfied, with all the Comforts of Life, without him; the Visits of his Love; the Smiles of his Face; the Light of his Countenance. *Psal. iv. 6. There be many that say, who will shew us any Good; but, Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us.* They have not found all the Grace that they would have, and all the Comfort that they desire, but they have found Jesus Christ, and the Beginnings of his Grace. These long, pray and labour to gain the Knowledge of their Interest in him; and cannot be satisfied till they can make it out; and see their Relation to him; that they are the Objects of his special Love and Delight. *Psal. xxxv. 3. Say to my Soul, I am thy Salvation. Cant. 8. 6. Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon thy Arm: for Love is strong as Death; Jealousy is cruel as the Grave, the Coals thereof are Coals of Fire, which hath a most vehement Flame.*

[4.] THEY have already found Jesus Christ, that prize him above all Persons and things. *1 Pet. ii. 7. To you therefore which believe he*

is

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is precious, Psal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. He is the chiefest of ten thousands.*

[5.] THEY have already found Christ, that cannot bear the Thoughts of parting with him. They can part with the World; with their dearest Relations; and with their own Lives, rather than part with Jesus Christ. Cant. iii. 5. *When I had found him, I held him, and would not let him go.* And as they count his Favour as Life; and his Loving-Kindness better than Life; so they dread his Frowns as Death. Psal. cxliii. 7. *O hide not thy Face from me; lest I be like those that go down to the Dead.* They are thus desirous of the Presence of Christ; because they know that Christ is their Life; their Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption; He is their Head of vital Influence; their Fountain; their Treasure; their Food; their Strength; their Hope of Glory; and their all in all.

[6.] THEY have already found Jesus Christ, whose Heart's Desire and Prayer is, that all others may find him. And according to their affectionate Prayers, they join their hearty Endeavours to bring others to know and win Christ. See how Grace works in the Souls of such as have found Jesus Christ; and judge thereby, whether you have found him. John i. 45. *We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write,*
Jesus

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Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. And then they add, *come and see.* And *John iv. 29. Come, see a Man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?*

(4.) WHAT do Souls find, that find Jesus Christ? O what Man on Earth, or Angel of Heaven can answer this Question to the full? It is not possible to set forth the Happiness of that Soul. But I shall attempt an Answer in a few Particulars, according to our imperfect Knowledge, and shallow Apprehensions.

[1.] THOSE that find Jesus Christ *find Life.* So personal Wisdom has inform'd us, in the Context. *Ver. 35. He that findeth me findeth Life, and shall obtain Favour of the Lord.* Which Expression implies, that such as come short of Christ, are in an Estate of Spiritual Death; dead in Law, and dead in Trespases and Sins; but those that find Jesus Christ, so as to receive and rest upon him, and submit to his Righteousness and Government, they find Life. Such have Spiritual Life, in the Union of their Souls with Jesus Christ, by Faith; and the Union of the Special Grace of God with their Souls; they have the Life of Justification, in the Removal of Guilt from their Souls, in the Pardon of their Sins and Deliverance from Curse and Condemnation. *Acts xiii. 39.* And they have the Life of Sanctification and Holiness; they are dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, and to the Service of Jesus Christ. And they have

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have the Life of Comfort, in a well-grounded Hope of Heaven. Col. i. 27. *Christ in you the Hope of Glory.* And they have the Life of Glory itself; in the Title and Promise. 1 John ii. 25. This is in the Hands of Jesus Christ to bestow upon his People. John xvii. 2. *Thou hast given him Power over all Flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him.* And they also find Life as they, thro' Jesus Christ, obtain the Seal and Earnest of it; the Spirit, and the Graces of the Spirit of God; *the Things that accompany Salvation.* Heb. vi. 9. Hence we see the Reason, why every one that hears of Jesus Christ, should look after an actual Interest in him; because none find Life till they find Jesus Christ. *He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life:* Therefore, they that would obtain eternal Life, must begin with Jesus Christ; he is the first and chief Gift of God to Men. If Christ is ours, all good things are ours. Our Right and Title to all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, and all that Heaven itself contains, comes in thro' Jesus Christ, and Relation to him thro' Faith, which is a Means of the Souls Espousal to him.

[2.] THEY that find Jesus Christ find the best Friend. A most tender, loving, sympathizing Friend. What was spoken of Israel of old, is true of all Spiritual Israelites. *Isai. lxiii. 9. In all their Afflictions he was afflicted; and the Angel of his Presence saved them;*

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them, in his Love, and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of old. He has a Feeling of our Infirmities. Heb. iv. 15. He bears with many Provocations; His Love covers a Multitude of Sins. And he is a most free and open-hearted Friend; ready to impart every necessary Truth to his People; and will keep back nothing that may be profitable for them. John xiv. 2. *If it were not so, I would have told you.* John xv. 15. *Henceforth I call you not Servants; for the Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you Friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* And he is also a most bountiful Friend; he gives to all his People richly of his Treasures of Grace; and he gave his very Life, his precious Blood for them. John xv. 13. *Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,* Ver. 14. Moreover, he is a most constant Friend; unchangeable in his Love and Friendship; He is a Friend at all Times. John xiii. 1. *Having loved his own, that were in the World, he loved them to the End.*

[3.] THOSE that find Jesus Christ, obtain Favour of the Lord. Ver. 35. That is, not the common, but the special Favour of God. Psal. xxx. 5. *In his Favour is Life.* But wherein consists the special Favour of the Lord?

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[1. IN the free Pardon of all their Sins. *Eph. i. 7. We have Redemption thro' his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.* O what a Favour is it, to have our Guilt taken away ; and to be freed from Curse and Condemnation ; and the naked Soul to be cloathed and adorned with the Robes of Christ's Righteousness. *David* describeth the Blessedness of that Man, whose Soul and Sins are cover'd, thro' the Righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed. *Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Explain'd Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8.*

[2. THE special Favour of God consists also, in his setting the Soul at Liberty from the Bondage and Dominion of Sin. This is the Work of Christ, by his Spirit and Grace. *John viii. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And the Blessedness is such, that the Soul shall never return to Bondage again. *Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have Dominion over you ; for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

[3. THE special Favour of God consists, in making Believers Heirs with Jesus Christ, of all the Blessings of the new Covenant, and of eternal Life itself. *Rom. viii. 17. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint-Heirs with Jesus Christ.* This is a Fruit of God's special Favour : or, which is the same, of his free Grace. *Tit. iii. 7. That being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life.* God's taking into his Family, such as were Strangers

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Strangers and Foreigners, Enemies and Rebels, is an undeniable Proof, that it is of Grace.

[4.] THE special Favour of God consists also, in making the very weakest and meanest of the Disciples of Jesus Christ, the Subjects of his special Care. As he brought them into the Fold of Christ, drawing them with the Cords of his everlasting Love; so he feeds them; he leads and guides them; and he watches over them Night and Day, lest any hurt them.

[5.] GOD exerts his special Favour to his People, in that his Ear is ever open to their Prayers. He is ready to grant all their Requests, and Desires of their Hearts. *Matt. vii. 7. Ask, and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. John xiv. 13, 14. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it.*

[4.] THOSE that find Jesus Christ, find the Pearl of great Price; the true Riches; durable Riches and Righteousness; a large suitable and everlasting Portion and Inheritance: A Portion for ever. *Psal. lxxiii. 26. All Treasures of Grace are in Jesus Christ for his People. He is full of Grace and Truth, and he can fill the Treasures of the needy. Ver. 21, That I may cause them that love me to inherit Substance, and I will fill their Treasures; Here is a double Promise; together with*

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with the Description of the happy Souls that shall inherit the Promises.

[1. THEY shall inherit Substance. The Lord Jesus Christ has a substantial Inheritance to bestow upon all that love him. Our present Life is but a Shadow. *Jam. iv. 14. What is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away.* And such also are all the desirable Enjoyments of Life; they are but Shadows; Riches, Honours, Pleasures, and even the best of Relations, are but Shadows. But true Grace is Substance; it will never vanish away, or disappoint the Owner. Grace take fast hold of Jesus Christ the Rock; and Jesus Christ keeps fast Hold of Grace; it is in his keeping; The Stability of Grace is owing to the Power and Unchangeableness of Christ. *Psal. cxxv. 1. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.* Jesus Christ is faithful to him that appointed him. And he is able to keep the Soul and his own Work of Grace in it, and their Portion for them. — But what is this Substance, that every one that loves the Lord Jesus Christ shall inherit? It is God himself with all his Perfections; and Jesus Christ with all his Purchase and Treasures of Grace; It is all the Blessings of the New Covenant, with all the great and precious Promises; and it is eternal Life itself, with all the unsearchable Enjoyments thereof; that is Substance

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Substance indeed; it is an *eternal Weight of Glory*. It is a *Crown of Life*, that *fadeth not away*. This is called a *better and more enduring Substance*. Heb. x. 34.

[2. THE other Promise made to those that love Jesus Christ is; *I will fill their Treasures*. The former Promise shew'd the People of God, that their special Mercies are *substantial Mercies*; not corruptible things. This Promise shews them, that they are *Soul-satisfying Mercies*: *I will fill their Treasures*. Their very Hearts Desires shall be satisfied. God will not only keep them alive, but will enrich them. The Word Treasure imports *Plenty*; a little Quantity of any thing, tho' it be good, useful and suitable, is not called a Treasure; but there is enough in Jesus Christ and in the Covenant and Promises, and in Heaven itself, to fill the Treasures of all the Disciples of Christ; they are in Wants and Straits, while here, but when they come to Heaven, their Treasures will be filled, *their Joy will be full*. Besides, the Word Treasure implies something great, *valuable and suitable*. Wise Men don't use to count Things of little Value, or little Use to be their Treasure. And Believers Treasures, are not only Good, but Goodness itself. Psal. xxxi. 19. *O how great is the Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the Sons of Men!* And Treasure implies, also, something secret;

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secret ; something that lies hid, and unknown to any but the Owner. As a Believer's Life is hid with Christ in God ; it is a Life unknown to all Men, but to the Believer himself ; so is his Treasure. *Eye hath not seen, or Ear heard, neither hath entered into the Heart of Man, what God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. Once more, a Treasure implies Safety. The Inheritance and Portion of a Believer is well secured ; it is in the Hands of Jesus Christ himself. And as their Souls are secured in him. *John x. 28. None shall pluck them out of my Hands.* So their Treasure is that good Part that shall never be taken away from them. *Luke x. 42.* The Lord Jesus Christ has Treasures of Grace to bestow upon his People ; what is laid up in him, as Mediator, is not for himself, but for his Disciples. The Psalmist said, *He received Gifts ;* *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* The Apostle said, *He gave Gifts to Men.* *Eph. iv. 8.* One explains the other ; he received them, as Mediator, that he might give them to his Disciples. And he is as ready to give, as he was to receive ; and he would not have received them, but that he design'd to give them. And, in every Age, his People have been receiving of his Mediatory-Fulness. *John i. 16.* Whatever Measures of Grace any receive from Jesus Christ, in this Life, their Treasures are not yet full : there is something lacking in their Faith ; and so there is in every other Grace. There

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There is Room enough left for Prayer, and for every Gospel-Ordinance. But Jesus Christ, who has been the Author, will be the Finisher; *He will fill their Treasures.* Psal. cxxxviii. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.* Phil. i. 6. *Being confident of this very thing; that he, who hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it to the Day of Jesus Christ.*—These are great and precious Promises; but who are the happy Souls, that may lay hold of them? Who shall inherit Substance? Who shall have their Treasures filled? The Answer to this Question brings me to the third Head.

[3. THE Description of the Persons, to whom the Promises are made; and they are such as love the Lord Jesus Christ. *That I may cause them that love me, to inherit Substance, and I will fill their Treasures.* And they are such as hate all known Sin: they that love Sin, do not love Jesus Christ; they that love Christ cannot bear them that dishonour him. They love Jesus Christ, that sincerely seek him: the Love of Christ and seeking of him, are put in one Verse of the Chapter where our Text is, *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.* From whence we learn, that such as love Jesus Christ will seek him; and those that seek him sincerely, love him: That is, such as seek his Favour, his Grace, his Presence, his Likeness, his Interest and Kingdom. And they love Jesus Christ, that love his Image, those that

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are like him; *The Saints, the Excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my Delight.* And they love Jesus Christ, that take Care to keep his Commandments. *John xiv. 21. He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*——To keep his Commandments, is to believe in him; *1 John iii. 23. This is his Commandment, that we should believe in the Name of the Son of God.* And to keep his Commandments, is to order the Conversation according to the revealed Will of God: for Faith works by Love, and sincere Love carries out the Soul to chearful Service; *2 John 6. This is Love, this is the best Evidence of true Love to God and Jesus Christ, that we walk according to his Commandments.* It is in vain to pretend Love to our Lord Jesus Christ, without a sincere Concern, and Care so to do: for Love and Obedience to Christ are inseparable Companions. And they that love Jesus Christ, take Care to imitate him; to be Followers of him; in Meekness, Patience, Humility, Submission to the Will of God, in Holiness, and delight to do the Will of God. And such as love and delight in Jesus Christ, take a particular Pleasure to think and speak of and for him; What we most love and delight in, we have most frequently upon our Minds and Thoughts, they are well pleased with Jesus Christ, and all that he is made of God to them. Now, poor, weak, humble, dejected Disciple of Jesus

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Jesus Christ; behold here is a gracious Promise, full and every way suited to thy present Condition. What are thy chief Desires? Is it not for more Grace; more Holiness; more Experience; more Comfort? Go then and plead these great and precious Promises with him that freely made them; put him in Remembrance, by Faith in Prayer. Canst not thou say, as the Apostle Peter did, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Tho' I cannot love thee as thou hast loved me; or as some other Disciples do; or as I myself desire to do; yet I love thee in Sincerity: for I cannot live contented, with all the desirable Enjoyments of Life, without thee; I cannot bear thy Absence; I long for thy Presence; I love thy Word, thy Ordinances and thy People; I esteem thy Favour as Life, and thy Loving-kindness better than Life; I desire to be like thee, and to have an Heart disposed to serve and walk with thee. O permit me to plead thy own Promise, which thou hast most graciously made, for the Comfort of them that love thee. I am, in myself, but a poor empty Cistern, but I come as such to Jesus Christ, as a full and overflowing Fountain. And I ask but thy Remembrance of thy own gracious Promise: *Lord, fill my Treasure.* Lord, increase my Faith, and let it work by Love; that it may carry out my Soul to Obedience
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and Holiness. I count all the World but a Shadow; Riches, Honours, Relations and the best of Friends upon Earth, are but Shadows. O give me the more substantial Treasures, which are laid up in Christ and thy new Covenant; the Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and that love Jesus Christ and his Appearance.



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SERMON V.

Prov. viii. 31.

My Delights were with the Sons of Men.



SHALL proceed to make some further Application of this Portion of Scripture, without repeating what has been, already, done; therefore I add;

6. WE may learn from hence, *the Misery, as well as the Sin, of those that have no sincere Love to, and Delight in, the Lord Jesus Christ; nor Heart to seek his Love and Favour.* These are miserably poor indeed, destitute of true Grace, yet are not sensible of their Wants and Misery; and therefore they seek not the true Riches; They are diseased and wounded, yet seek not to the great Physician, Jesus Christ, for the Healing of their Souls. They are naked, or ragged and filthy, yet they apply not to Jesus Christ
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for the Covering and Ornament of his perfect Righteousness; that they may be comely, in the Sight of God, ~~thro' his Comeliness put upon them~~; and may be freed from Curse and Condemnation. I may say to such poor Souls, as the Prophet did to those Jews, who neglected the great Concerns of their Souls, *Hos. x. 12. It is Time to seek the Lord.* If you never yet sincerely sought after him, it is now high Time to begin to seek him.

(1.) As starving Souls would seek after their necessary Food: Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life; the Heavenly Manna; and Souls must starve and perish for ever, if they do not apply to him, by Faith, and *eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of Christ.*

(2.) Souls should seek Jesus Christ, as those that are sensible of their Poverty would seek after Riches, or at least for the Necessaries of Life; Jesus Christ and his Grace is a thousand Times better, and more needful for Souls, than Gold and Silver. So it is asserted, ver. 19. *My Fruit is better than Gold, and my Revenue than choice Silver.*

WHAT is the Fruit of Christ? I answer; It is the Fruit of his eternal Love; that is, his efficacious drawing of Souls from a State of Sin, to God in Christ, by his mighty Power and sovereign free Grace. This is a Fruit, in Time, of his everlasting Love and Delights, *Jer. xxxi. 3. I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore with Loving-kindness*

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ness have I drawn thee. This drawing, is God's bringing the Soul to close with Jesus Christ by Faith, and to submit to his Righteousness and Government. Moreover, the Fruit of Jesus Christ, which is said to be better than Gold and Silver, is intended of the Fruits of his Death; such necessary Mercies, as he has purchased for his People, by his precious Blood; such as his justifying Righteousness, made over to every believing Soul, and the free Pardon and Forgiveness of Sins, and the necessary Fruit of it, Freedom from eternal Condemnation. And the Fruit of Christ is also intended of the Soul's Deliverance from the Power, Reign and Dominion of Sin. And the Fruits of Christ are also, the blessed Fruits of Christ's prevailing Intercession, at the right Hand of God, thro' the Virtue of his Obedience and one Offering. And the Fruits of Christ are the same with the Fruits of the Spirit, mention'd, Gal. v. 22. *The Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.* And the Fruits of Christ may be intended of his own Ordinances, with his Blessing attending them, or on sincere Souls attending upon him in them. And so we are to understand that Text, Cant. ii. 3. *I sat under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my Taste;* that is, the Experience of the believing Soul; so is Assistance in Prayer, and gracious Answers, in Season; and so are

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the great and precious Promises, when the Soul can view, by the Eye of Faith, how great and suitable and sure they are; and can also see its Interest in them. Now these are said to be better than Gold and Silver; but upon what Accounts are they so? We answer, as they are more valuable in themselves: there's no Comparison between Gold and Grace. And they are better, as they will turn to better Account; What can be valued with the Blessing of Pardon of Sin? And they are better, as they are more suitable to the State and Wants of the Soul; these will give Comfort and Safety in the Hour of Death. And they are better, as they are more durable: Gold and Silver are among the Things that corrupt and perish with the using, 1 Pet. i. 18.

3. You should seek Jesus, and his Grace and Favour, as condemned Malefactors seek the King's Mercy; or would ask his gracious Pardon: So you must do, or die: If thy proud Soul will not stoop to ask Pardon, thro' the Righteousness of Christ, thou must go to Execution.

4. You should seek Jesus Christ and his Favour, as diseased Souls seek to the Physician; and Souls must die eternally, if they have not Relief from Christ, the great, the only Healer of Souls—— If any of you seek not after Jesus Christ and his Love and special Favour, What is it that you chiefly seek? Ask your own Souls.

O how

O how well were it for some of you, if the Searcher of Hearts could say to you, as the Angel did to the Disciples, Matt. xxviii. 5. *I know that ye seek Jesus* — Whatever you now chiefly seek after, in a little while it will appear, that there was nothing so valuable, nothing so much worth the seeking, as Jesus Christ and his Grace; nothing so necessary for the Life and Comfort of Souls. And I must add, this is the only Season of seeking him and his Favour, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Behold now is the accepted Time, behold now is the Day of Salvation.* Isai. lv. 6. *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near.*

You are now allowed to seek Jesus Christ; he is the free Gift of the Father, with all his Benefits; and his own free Gift, to every one that seeks him sincerely, tho' they are never so unworthy, you have his royal Word for it; *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early*, that is sincerely, *shall find me.* — Soul, canst thou make out, that thou hast sought, and found Jesus Christ? Be very thankful to God for opening thine Eyes to behold him, and thy Heart to entertain him. Have a Care of grieving him, by Neglect of Duty; or by slothful Performance of it; or by too warm Affections toward the World; or Conformity to it, in any Thing that is evil. But be ye Followers, or Imitators of God and of Jesus Christ, as dear Children.

7. DID Jesus Christ delight in his People from everlasting ; *then all the Disciples of Christ should delight in him.* He is *precious to every true Believer.* 1 Pet. ii. 7. He is, to them, *the chiefest of ten thousand.* Cant. v. 10. *Altogether lovely.* We have been told, already, that Jesus Christ was first in his Love to his People ; then he deserves the highest Delights of his Disciples ; as will appear on many Accounts.

1. As one that brings good Tidings from a far Country ; Tidings of great Things, and such as concern the present Peace and the eternal Welfare of our Souls, Tidings of Pardon of Sin, thro' the Merits of the Redeemer, for such as were under Curse and Condemnation : This is one of the most needful Mercies, that Sinners can receive from God ; and this is obtained alone thro' the Blood of CHRIST, Eph. i. 7. *We have Redemption thro' his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.* And when a Soul can make out his own Interest, he cannot but rejoyce in the Mercy, Matt. ix. 2. *Son, be of good cheer ; thy Sins are forgiven thee.* And considering that this great and necessary Mercy was obtain'd, for them, by Jesus Christ, how can the pardoned Soul choose but delight in him ? Would not any Man, under Condemnation, love and delight in another, who had not only obtain'd a Pardon for him, from the King, but had also dearly bought it ; not with

with Money, but with his own Life? The Lord Jesus Christ did this, for his People, with his own Blood. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold—but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without Blemish, and without Spot.*

2. The Disciples of Christ should delight in him, as loving Friends delight in each other. The Church of Believers so express their Love to him, Cant. v. 16. *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.* Jesus Christ is the Believer's best Friend. In great Condescension, he calls his Disciples so, Joh. xv.

15. *Henceforth I call you not Servants, for a Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends: for whatsoever I have received of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

But it was his mere Grace, that made them so, and that now treats them as Friends; and they should take Care to approve themselves to be the Friends of Jesus Christ, ver. 14. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

3. The Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him, as a Man does in his Portion.

They that have God in Christ for their God, have him for their Portion. Lam. iii. 24.

The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul. And they that have Interest in Christ, by Faith, have him, and his Treasures of Grace, for their Portion; and it is such a Portion, as every Way calls for, and deserves the Delights of the Owner.

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(1.) It is exceeding great; it is as large as Heaven and Earth. He that hath the Son of God, hath all good Things with him. If Christ is ours, all Things are ours; 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23. — *All Things are yours—And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* All the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace; all the great and precious Promises, and all the Glories of Heaven itself. This contains both Grace and Glory; every Thing needful for Soul and Body; for Time and Eternity; and therefore is a great and suitable Portion.

(2.) It is a Soul-satisfying Portion; it is not like a Portion of the Things of this World; Eccl. v. 10. *He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver, nor he that loveth abundance, with Increase;* but he that hath Jesus Christ, needs to desire nothing to be added to him. As Philip once said of the Father, Joh. xiv. 8. *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us;* so Jesus Christ and his Fullness once possessed, will satisfy the Desires of the Soul. The proper Ground of Delight is to have what we desire; and to be content and satisfied with what we have.

(3.) God in Christ is a durable Portion; an everlasting Inheritance; that which will never fail, or disappoint the Owner, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee; my Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.*

(4.)

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4. THE Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him, as the dearest Relations delight in the Love, Company and Conversation of each other; and when they are absent, to think and speak of them. Where there is a sincere Delight in any Person; such will be commending of them; longing to hear of and from them; and desiring their Return. *O let my Beloved come.* Cant. iv. 16. The Lord Jesus Christ stands in the nearest and dearest Relations to his People; He is their Husband; their Head of vital Influence; He is their Life; their Physician and Healer. Psal. ciii. 2. *Who healeth all thy Diseases;* He is their Counsellor, Advocate and Intercessor, with the Father; He is their Shepherd, to lead and guide them, to watch over, protect and defend them, and provide for them. He is their City of Refuge and Ark of Safety. And he is also the Medium of their Relation to God the Father. It is by Faith in Jesus Christ, that any become the Sons of God, Joh. i. 12. *As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Gal. iii. 26. *For ye are all the Children of God, thro' Faith in Christ Jesus.*

5. The Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him, on the Account of what he has done for them, as their Surety; and what he has born and suffer'd, in their Room and Stead; He bore their Sins and Sorrows;

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their Guilt and Punishment, that he might set them free from both. Isa. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our Transgressions; he was bruised for our Iniquities; He suffer'd and died in their Room; the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God.*

HE loved us, and gave himself for us. Gal. i. 4. And he loved us, and washed us from our Sins, in his own Blood. Rev. i. 5. Thus he paid our Debts; satisfied divine Justice; deliver'd us from Prison and Captivity; and thus he can give Grace and Glory, to all his humble and sincere Followers.

6. THE Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him, on the Account of the inexhaustible Treasures of Grace that are laid up in him, as Mediator, for them; His Fullness of Grace. Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all Fullness dwell.* This cannot be understood of his Treasures, as God; for those were not at the Pleasure of the Father; but essential to his Nature: But as Mediator, he is a full and open Fountain, both to cleanse from Sin, and to supply with all necessary Grace. Joh. i. 14, 16. *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. And of his Fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.* He is their Food, the heavenly Manna, the Bread of Life; he that gives and maintains spiritual Life; and thence he is called *the quickening Spirit.* He is

s made all Things to them, 1 Cor. i. 30. *Who of God is made unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.*

(1.) *All our saving Knowledge and sanctified Understanding, comes from Jesus Christ, as the great Prophet of the Church. His Office is to reveal the Mind of God to Men, in order to their Salvation; every Thing that he has received of the Father, with relation to their Duty, Portion and Privileges.*

(2.) *He is made, of God, to us Righteousness; as he covers every Believer, with his perfect Righteousness, as our Surety. He wrought it out, by his Obedience and Death, and he brought it in, by the Ministry of the Gospel; and by Faith he imputes it to every Believer. Rom. iii. 22. Even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all, them that believe. Isai. lxi. 10. — He hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness.*

(3.) *He is made to us Sanctification: The Change and Cleansing of the Soul, is thro' the Virtue of his precious Blood; this is the Fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleaness. Zech. xiii. 1. It is called a Fountain, as there is a Sufficiency in it to cleanse and sanctify Souls, in every Nation, and every Age. And it is called an open Fountain; not a Fountain sealed, as the Gospel-Church, but opened, because it is set open, by the Ministry*

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Ministry of the Gospel, that every defiled Soul may have free Access thereto and be healed and cleansed.

(4.) THE Lord Jesus Christ is made to us Redemption. As he saves his People from Curse and Condemnation; Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeem'd us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* And he not only purchased, but he applies his Grace to Souls; taking away the Dominion of Sin, and translating them from the Kingdom of Darkness, into the Kingdom of Light and Grace. And he will also redeem their Bodies from the Power of the Grave. John vi. 39, 40. *I will raise it up at the last Day.*

7. THE Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him, on the Account of what he has already wrought in them and for them: for so he does every thing that is necessary to fit them for the Service and Enjoyment of God. He has opened their Eyes, that were born blind; and turned them from Darkness to Light; He has given them an Understanding, to know themselves; and to know God and Jesus Christ, which is the Beginning of Eternal Life. John xvii. 3. *This is Life Eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* He has written his Laws in their Hearts; and given them a sanctified, believing and transforming Knowledge of his Will; and a sincere Love to, and high Esteem of his Word and Ordinances; He has disposed their

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their Hearts to approve of the whole revealed Will of God, as holy, just and good ; and given them a sincere Disposition of Soul, to make it the Rule of their Faith, Worship and Conversation. And he has saved them from spiritual Bondage to Sin and Satan, and brought them into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. John viii. 36. *If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And he has given them his Spirit, the Seal and Earnest of the Inheritance. He has implanted his special Grace in their Hearts ; and given the Things that accompany Salvation, the Blessings of the great and precious Promises ; and Faith to embrace them, and take the Comfort of them.

8. THE Disciples of Christ should delight in him, on the Account of what he is now doing in Heaven for them, as an Advocate and Intercessor with the Father. 1 John ii. 1. *These Things I write unto you, that you sin not ; and if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.* An Advocate is one that takes the Part, and pleads the Cause of another. Jesus Christ does so for Believers. Heb. vii. 25. *Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make Intercession for them.*

Thus I have offer'd some Reasons, why the Disciples of Jesus Christ should delight in him ; but before any one can do so, it is needful that they should make out their Interest

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terest in him, and Relation to him; that they may safely say, with the Apostle, John xx. 28. *My Lord and my God.* And with the Church, Cant. ii. 16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* And then they are prepared to delight in Christ; and to take up their Satisfaction in him, at all Times, and even under the greatest Afflictions and Trials of the present Life; this will be a sufficient Balance against all Disappointments. Heb. iii. 17, 18. *Altho' the Fig-Tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls:* This is a Supposition of great Affliction indeed, and enough to make *their Hearts die within them,* as Nabal's did, who have their Portion only in this Life; but if the Cistern is empty, Faith can look and apply to the full Fountain; they have God, and Christ, and the Covenant of Grace to go to. *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.* This Joy in God, as our God, is a thousand Times better than all carnal Delights; for they are no better than mistaken Imaginations, and deluding Dreams. Things of this World are not what the most of Men take them to be. Many delight in present Enjoyments; because they suppose they have something valuable and suitable in Hand, but have been often convinc'd that they are but Shadows; *Riches, and Relations*

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tions too, *make themselves Wings, and fly away,* and disappoint the Hopes of the Owner. All worldly Delights perish with the Using. But Delight in Jesus Christ is a real Thing; its Foundation is sure; its Spring and Streams are everlasting. As to the Souls drinking of the Rivers of Pleasure, it begins in this World; and with some of the Disciples of Jesus Christ, it may begin late; for it cannot begin 'till Grace is wrought in the Heart; but its Spring was from everlasting; and its Streams shall never fail, but endure for ever. O how pleasant, profitable and reasonable is it that every Believer should chiefly delight in Jesus Christ. This is something that resembles Heaven itself, which is called *the Joy of the Lord*. The very Sum of Happiness, in Heaven, is the Souls delightful Enjoyment of God in Christ. The little Measure of it, that, at any Time, is enjoy'd here, is *Strength to the upright Soul*. Neh. viii. 10. *The Joy of the Lord shall be their Strength*. Thus it is, as it ever carries out the Soul, with more Enlargement, unto holy Work; and inflames the Soul, with Love, in Duty. It is like Oyl to the Wheels. Psal. cxix. 32. *I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my Heart*. Pray let us bring these Things to our Hearts and Consciences; Can you make out that you love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity? Are your chief Delights in him? It is worth your While to give all Diligence
to

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to clear up this Matter : for great Things depend upon the Knowledge of it.

(1.) THEN you may draw this comfortable Conclusion, that God is your God and Father. This is gather'd from, John viii. 42. *If God was your Father, you would love me.* You may transpose the Words; and they will hold infallibly true; If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, then God is your Father. If you delight in Jesus Christ, then you are not Orphans, or Fatherless; but you have a heavenly Father to go to, in all your Wants.

(2.) If you love and delight in Christ, then you may conclude, that God the Father himself loves you. I said before, that your Love to Christ, is a sure Evidence, that Jesus Christ loves you; for he has said, *I love them that love me.* But now I add, that your Love to Christ is a sure Evidence, that God the Father loves you. John xvi. 27. *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me; and have believed that I came out from God.* John xiv. 21. *He that bath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

(3.) If you love and delight in Jesus Christ, then you may safely conclude, that your Sins are forgiven you. Luk. vii. 47. *Her Sins, which are many, are forgiven her; for she loveth much:* Her Love to Christ, was not the Cause, but the Evidence of her Forgiveness.

(4.)

(4.) If you love Jesus Christ in Sincerity, you may draw this comfortable Conclusion from it; that nothing shall alienate the Love of Christ from you. Rom. viii. 35. *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? Ver. 38.— I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

(5.) If you love Jesus Christ in Sincerity; then you may safely conclude, that whatever befalls you in the World, shall be over-ruled for your good. Rom. viii. 28. *We know that all Things work together for good to them that love God; to them that are the Called, according to his Purpose.*

(6.) If you love Jesus Christ, you may draw this comfortable Conclusion from it, that however unworthy you are, you shall be brought to the full Enjoyment of all the Glory and Blessedness of Heaven. 1 Cor. ii. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Eighthly, If the Delights of Christ, were with the Sons of Men from everlasting; then the Delights of all true Christians should be much in the Word and Ordinances of Jesus Christ

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Christ, as Means appointed to enjoy him, and to receive more abundant Grace out of his Fullness. This is more than to talk of Christ, or to make a common Profession of him. I might shew you, from the Word of God, that true Grace ever carries out the Soul to delight both in the Word and Ordinances of Jesus Christ.

1. THEY ever delight in the Word of God. Psal. cxix. 97. *O how love I thy Law, it is my Meditation all the Day.* What Persons love and delight in, they often think of: And the Delight in the Word of God arises both from Agreement and Interest. It is valuable, it is something suitable and it is their own. Psal. xciv. 17. *In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.* Psal. cxix. 103. *How sweet are thy Words to my Taste; yea sweeter than Honey to my Mouth.* Job xxiii. 12. *I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food.* Rom. vii. 22. *I delight in the Law of God, after the inward Man.* The Law, is the whole revealed Will of God. And this is the same that God promised to his People; Jer. xxxi. 33. — *I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People.*

2. As Grace teaches Men to love and delight in the Word of God; so it teaches them to love and honour, and highly esteem the Ordinances of Christ; not only as they
bear

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bear the Stamp of his Wisdom and Authority ; but as they have experienced the Benefit of waiting upon God in them. Prov. iii. 17. *Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* Cant. ii. 3. *As the Apple-Tree, among the Trees of the Wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons ; I sat under his Shadow, with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my Taste.* These bring more Strength of Grace to their Souls, and that is one Occasion of their high Esteem of the Ordinances of Christ, Increase of Grace and Experience, makes way for their spiritual Comfort ; *Joy and Peace in believing.* Rom. xv. 13. It is no Credit to Religion, nor to the Disciples of Christ, that any of them should so much as seem to slight the Word and Ordinances of Jesus Christ ; or neglect the Means of Grace, and of Communion with God in Christ : It is the ready Way to Doubts and Darkeness in their Souls ; and to bring up an evil Report on the good Ways of God ; and to discourage weak Beginners, and sadden the Hearts of Fellow-Disciples. Is the Table of the Lord contemptible in your Eyes ? Does your Father and Lord keep a poor House ? Are his Provisions mean ? Is God a hard Master ? Does he call for your Service and Obedience without Assistance, or without Strength and Comfort ? If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, you should still be coming. 1 Pet. ii. 4. How can you choose but desire more ? And pray,
Lord,

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Lord, evermore, give us this Bread. John vi.

34.

IT is not possible for any one to prove his Love to Jesus Christ to be sincere, if he slights the Ordinances of Christ. Let the Pleadings of the Flesh be never so plausible; he that delights in Jesus Christ, delights in the Ordinances of Christ; as they are appointed Means of Enjoyment of him. And on the other hand, so far as Men are defective in their Love to, Esteem of, or Delight in the Word and Ordinances of Christ; so far they are defective in their Love to Jesus Christ himself. I wish this Truth were more generally believed, and laid to Heart. You may mark that Man or Woman, as ready to die, who can, at their own Pleasure, or Self-Will, neglect the Ordinances of Christ, as needless Things, or of human Invention, or such as they can very easily live without.



S E R M O N



S E R M O N VI.

Prov. viii. 31.

My Delights were with the Sons of Men.



A M now come to the last Use that I shall make of the Text. And that is ; If the Delights of Jesus Christ were with the Sons of Men, from everlasting ; *then all the Disciples of Jesus Christ should love and delight in each other.* I have shewn already, how the Grace of Jesus Christ disposed the Soul to love all that have the Grace of God in Truth, all that belong to Christ, all that bear his Image. - Psal. xvi. 3. *The Saints that are in the Earth, the Excellent, in whom is all my Delight.* The Saints and Excellent of the Earth, are Believers in Christ, such whose Souls are renewed by the Spirit of Grace and Holiness ; that are in part sanctified ; Souls that have chosen God in Christ for their God ; that have taken hold of his Covenant ; that have the Root of the Matter in them ; that have

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have received the Things that accompany Salvation.

You have no just Reason to think, that the People of God, in *David's* Time, were without their Faults and Infirmities, any more than now ; or that they had perfect Grace and Holiness, without Corruption, or that they had nothing ungrateful in them. Alas ! there never were such Saints upon Earth : Yet, says holy David, *All my Delight is in them.* If we can spy in them a little Grace in Truth, it may be that's as much as they may be able to do with regard to us : Yet that should be the Ground of our mutual Love and Delight. Jesus Christ, that pitch'd his Love upon his People, from everlasting, will take Notice whether his Members are beloved for the Father's Sake, and for his own Sake. There is no Way to prove our selves to be Disciples of Christ indeed, without sincere Love to such as are so. John xiii. 35. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another.*

AND Jesus Christ takes Notice how the carnal World despises them. They count them the very *Off-scowering of the Earth.* That is, as vile as the very Dross and Rust. But this mistaken Judgment of the carnal World, concerning the People of God, arises from their Ignorance of what God has done for them ; and of the relation they stand in to God, and to Jesus Christ ; and that these are the Favourites of Heaven ; and, that
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with Jesus Christ, they are Heirs of eternal Life. In this Respect the world knows them not; that is, they little think that these, whom they hate, are the Objects of God's special Love, and that they are his dear Children. 1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God; therefore the World knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* The carnal World knows their Names, but not as written in Heaven; and they know their Persons, but not as united to Christ by Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom; they know not what God has laid up for them, and what he will bring them unto. They are the Excellent of the Earth, in the Account of God, as well as of good Men. Not by natural Birth, nor for their Brightness of natural Parts; for so they are, many of them, as base and mean as others; but by Grace. Each of them may truly say, as the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* It is the free Grace of God alone, that has made a Difference, between one Man and another, where there was none by Nature. — And now I shall offer some Reasons, both why the carnal World should not slight, despise and hate the People of God; and in an especial Manner, why the Disciples of Jesus Christ should dearly love, highly esteem and delight in each other, every one that has the Grace of God in Truth; tho' never so weak.

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1. **THEY** are most noble born. *Born of God ; born from above.* John iii. 3, 5. born in God's House ; John i. 13. *As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God ; even as many as believed in his Name. Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* It is common for such as have great Relations, to make their Boasts of them ; and especially such as are counted Noble Men, by their Birth, to talk of their Noble Blood ; it is a poor Matter, without the Grace of God ; but it is common. But never had any Man upon Earth such great and noble Relations, as the People of God have. They have God himself for their Father ; and they are his dear Children. Eph. v. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth ; the King of Kings and Lord of Lords ; He is their Elder Brother. And he is not ashamed to own them, to be his Relations. Heb. ii. 11. And they are married to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. The Church of true Believers, is *the Lamb's Wife.* Isai. liv. 5. *Thy Maker is thy Husband ;* Here's an Honour conferred upon sinful Mortals, above the Angels of Heaven : They are the Friends of the Bridegroom ; but not married to Christ.

2. **NEVER** had any Prince or King, upon Earth, such a great Estate, as the People of God have. Indeed, for the present, they have not much in Hand and Possession, because

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cause they are yet under Age; but, at the same Time, they are Heirs of all Things in Heaven and Earth. God in Christ is their Portion. *Lam. iii. 24. The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul.* And God the Father has prepared an eternal Kingdom for them. *Luk. xii. 32.* And what God has prepared, Jesus Christ will give them. *John xvii. 2.*

3. NEVER was any Prince, or King upon Earth, so adorned, as the People of God are. *Psal. xlv. 13. The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold:* That is the Robe of Christ's Righteousness; that glorious Righteousness, which was wrought out by Jesus Christ, our Surety; and brought in, by the Gospel. *Dan. ix. 24.* and apply'd to all that believe. *Rom. iii. 22. Which is unto all, and upon all them that believe.* This is that same Righteousness of God, which is witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ver. 21. They knew no other justifying Righteousness, than that of Christ our Surety with God. This is what the Old-Testament Believers were cloathed with; *Isai. lxi. 10. He hath cloathed me with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness.* And this was the same, in which they were directed and assisted to Glory. *Isai. xlv. 25.* This is that Righteousness, which exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matt. vii. 20.* This is a Righteousness that exceeds the Righteousness of Adam

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in Innocency ; that was but the Righteous-
ness of a mere Creature ; this is the Right-
eousness of God : That was but a tempo-
rary and changeable ; but this is an Everlas-
ting Righteousness. And this exceeds the
Righteousness of the holy Angels ; theirs is
but the Righteousness of Creatures ; but
this is the Righteousness of God-Man.

4. NEVER had any Prince upon Earth
such a Life-Guard, as the People of God
have. It is a very lovely and yet awful
Sight, to see the King's Guards, performing
their Office about him. But how terrible
soever they appear, it is but an Arm of
Flesh : but now let us see wherein the Guard
of every Child of God, excells them. (1.)
The constant, faithful Guards of the Peo-
ple of God, are the holy Angels of Hea-
ven. *Heb. i. 14. Are they not, that is, they*
are, all ministring Spirits, sent forth to mini-
ster, for them, who shall be Heirs of Salva-
tion. Psal. xci. 11. He shall give his Angels
Charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy
Ways. Psal. xxxiv. 7. The Angel of the Lord
encampeth round about them that fear him.
But that which is infinitely more is, (2.) That
God himself is the Life-Guard of his People.
He watches over them Day and Night ; He
keeps them as a Man keeps the Apple of
his Eye. Tho' it is wonderful to read and
consider, yet it is full to our present Pur-
pose, that he who never slumbers nor sleeps,
has stiled himself, *the Watchman of Israel.*
Psal.

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Psal. cxxi. 3, 4. that is of the spiritual Seed of Jacob. He is a Wall of Fire round about his People, Zech. iii. 5. *the People of the Lord*

5. TRUE Believers are Honourable, as they are the Only Free-Men in the World. All others, whether rich or poor, are Vassals and Slaves to the worst of Tyrants; that is, to Satan and to their base and hurtful Lusts. But Believers are all Free-Men; that is, free from the Guilt and Power of Sin, by the Grace of God.

6. THE Believer in Christ is the happiest Man upon Earth; for whatsoever Condition he is brought into, he cannot be miserable. He may be much afflicted, as sick and in Pain; he may be slighted, and hated, and persecuted, but he cannot be miserable. (1.) He has free Access to God: he has the Ear of the God-hearing Prayer. Psal. cxl. iv.

15, 17. *The Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cries. The Righteous cry and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their Troubles.* (2.)

God will be with them, to help and uphold them. Isai. xli. 10. *Hear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right Hand of my Righteousness.* In the Fire and in the Water, he has engaged to stand by and protect them from Harm. (3.) God will surely do them good, by all their Afflictions. What he promised to Jacob, in his own Person, is applicable

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to all the spiritual Seed of *Jacob*. Gen. xxxii. 12. *Verily I will do thee good.* And this Truth, the People of God have experience'd, and left their Testimony upon Record, for the Assistance of the Faith and Hope of such as come after; Rom. viii. 28. *We know that all Things work together for good, to them that love God; to them that are the Called, according to his Purpose.*

¶ 7. *THEY* excel all others upon Earth, with Regard to their truest Wisdom; not the Wisdom of the World; or about Matters of this Life; therein the World may out-do them; *Luke xvi. 8.* The Children of this World are wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light; but in the Things of God, and Affairs relating to another World; there their Wisdom excells all others.

¶ (1.) *THEY* are wiser than all other Men, with Regard to their Choice: God himself hath first chosen them, and then directed their Choice for them; or else they would choose as foolishly as others do; or as unwisely as they themselves had formerly done; but, being taught of God, they choose the good Part that shall never be taken away from them. That is, God in Christ; the Favour and Grace of God; the Blessings of the new Covenant. And they choose the Word of God for their Rule; and the Spirit of God for their Guide; they choose to walk with God; not according to the Course of this World; but according to the Example of Christ.

Christ. And they choose the very same Way of Justification, and Salvation, as God has marked out, through the Gospel; that is, to be willing to suffer the Loss of all Things, that they may win Christ, and be found in him. Not only willing to let go all Sin, but all Trust in their own Righteousness. They live upon Jesus Christ and his Fullness of Grace, by Faith, as the Bread of Life; the heavenly Manna; they cannot live upon Husks, as others do; but have Bread to eat, that others know not of. *Matt. ix. 4.* It is said, *Man shall not live by Bread alone.* And this is the Man; this is the Heaven-born Soul, that must have something from Heaven, to live upon. And what is that? Every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God. By these Things Men live, and this is the Life of my Spirit.

(2.) They are the only Men that take Care to improve their precious Time, and spiritual Opportunities for the Glory of God and their own and others Profit. To day up Treasure in Heaven; *Matt. vi. 19.* to be rich in Grace and Experience; or to grow in Grace, and the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; *2 Pet. iii. 18.* And herein consists their Wisdom.

(3.) They look well to the Frame of their Souls, in holy Duties. According to that needful Charge. *Eccles. x. 1.* *Keep thy Foot, that is thy Heart and Affections, when thou goest to the House of God.* It is not

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enough for them to perform *bodily Exercise, which cannot profit*; but their Concern is, *that they may serve with their Spirits.* Rom. i. 9. That they may be sincere with God, in Religion; lively in their Souls, in the Exercise of Faith, Love and Desires towards God and Heaven; not only to keep in, but to run the Ways of his Commandments.

(4.) THEY keep their Eye, Heart and Hope upon the Fountain Fullness of Jesus Christ; not upon the Streams, not upon the Cisterns; nor on the Creatures, to rest there; they are but Shadows, perishing, disappointing; and herein also lies their truest Wisdom.

(5.) THEIR Trade is in Heaven, or they make Religion their Business; they chiefly seek the Things that are above. Their Heart and best Affections are there. Phil. iii. 20. Our Conversation, Trade and principal Business, is in Heaven, our Thoughts, Cares and chief Desires are there.

These are some of the great and weighty Reasons, why the carnal World should not despise, much less hate the People of God: But in a special manner, why all the Disciples of Jesus Christ should dearly love, and delight in each other.

Now let us see what Use and Improvement is made of this Subject by the personal Wisdom of God himself. In which Use and Application his contain'd in the Words immediately following the Words of our

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Text. *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye Children; for blessed are they that keep my Ways; blessed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the Posts of my Doors.*

A little familiar Explication of these Expressions shall finish this Text. And I am persuaded, that every sincere Soul desires to know their *Duty*, as well as their *Privileges*.

[1] It is the Duty and Interest of all that are under the Sound of the Gospel, to attend to the Voice of Jesus Christ in his Word. This was the Charge of God, to Men, when he sent his last and greatest Prophet into the World. When he, last of all, sent his Son, he expected that Men should reverence him, *Matt. xvii. 5. This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.* That is, hear, so as to believe in and obey him.

[2] THE Season is fixed, when Men should attend to what the Lord Jesus Christ should speak from Heaven; and that is *now*, without Delay; *Now therefore, hearken unto me.* Not to put it off 'till a more convenient Season; but attend to it presently. *Psal. xcv. 7, 8. To Day, if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.*

[3] THE Reason why every one should attend most carefully, and seriously to the Voice of Jesus Christ; and that's imply'd in the Word *therefore*; *now therefore hearken.* What does that Word principally refer us

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unto, as Arguments, why we should attend, most seriously, to what Jesus Christ speaks to us, in his Word ?

[1. BECAUSE he is the very Person, that was chosen of God, from everlasting, to be Mediator between God and Men ; and set up for a Surety with God for us ; with whom God the Father intrusted all the Concerns of his own Glory, and the Salvation of the Sons of Men : Therefore hearken, &c.

[2. BECAUSE he is so well acquainted with the Father and his Will, and with all the Counsels of God, about the Salvation of Sinners : *None knows the Father and his Will, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him*, Matt. xi. 27 : therefore hearken—

[3. BECAUSE he has such a dear and tender Love to Mankind ; his Delights were with the Sons of Men, from everlasting ; therefore his Love inclines him to seek the good and eternal Welfare of Souls : therefore hearken—

[4. BECAUSE, on all Accounts, they are blessed and happy that duly attend to the Voice of Jesus Christ ; that is, so as to turn from Sin to God ; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to practise what they hear. This is the Way to increase the Grace that Men have already received. *Isai. xl. 31. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength.* And it is the way to arrive safe at the Inheritance of the Saints. *Isai. lxiv. 4. For since the Beginning of the World, Men have*

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have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, nei-
ther hath the Eye seen, O God, besides thee,
what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for
him.

[4] Men are not only called upon to hear
the Voice of Jesus Christ, but to watch also.
Watch what the Lord is doing, either with
yourselfes or others; that would be a good
Direction to your Prayers: And watch even
while you are hearing the Word preached,
not only so as to keep your Eyes open; but
watch thy Heart; the Frame of thy Soul;
thy Thoughts; thy Desires and Designs;
That Charge that was left with the Israelites,
at the giving out of the Law; is as needful,
under the Gospel-Dispensation. Deut. xxxii.
46. *Set your Hearts unto all the Words which
I testify among you this Day, which ye shall
command your Children to observe to do, all the
Words of this Law: for it is not a vain Thing
for you; because it is your Life.*

[5] As we are directed to hearken and to
watch; so we are directed to wait upon the
Lord Jesus Christ: They that would know
and do the Will of their Lord, must wait
upon him to know his Will; what he would
have us to do.

[1. How should we wait on the Lord,
that we may obtain a Blessing from him?

1] We must wait with *Humility*, and in a
teachable Frame of Soul; as Disciples, or
Scholars wait on their Master for teaching,
and needful Instruction: for waiting is an

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 Act of Humility; Pride is ever an Enemy
 to Waiting and Learning. We should wait
 on the Lord for heavenly Wisdom and Un-
 derstanding, that we may know ourselves
 better, our Wants and Weaknesses; and
 may be better acquainted with the Covenant
 of Grace, and the Blessings of it; and with
 our Work and Duty; and our Interest and
 Privileges. This should be our earnest De-
 sire and Prayer to the Wisdom of God;
What I see not, teach thou me. And we
 should wait humbly, as Servants wait on
 their Master, with Submission, desiring to
 know, and disposed to do the Will of their
 Lord. Act. ix. 6. *Lord what wilt thou have*
me to do? Thus David sets forth this Duty
 of waiting on the Lord, Psal. cxxiii. 2.
Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes; that is my
 Heart and Soul; my Desires and Prayers;
O thou that dwellest in the Heavens. Behold,
as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of
their Masters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden
to the Hand of her Mistress; so our Eyes wait
upon the Lord our God, until that he have
Mercy upon us.

2] WE should wait with *Patience* and *Ex-*
pectation, as poor, needy Creatures wait at
 the Door of a bountiful Benefactor, for
 suitable and seasonable Relief. Accordingly,
 while we wait, we should make known our
 Requests to him, by Prayer and Supplica-
 tion; for waiting implies a Sense of Want,
 and those that would obtain Relief, must

cast

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cast their Burdens upon the Lord, by Faith in Prayer; and ask Mercy and Grace to help in Time of Need; Wisdom, Strength, Holiness, true Riches, and spiritual Comfort; for all these must come from God alone. And it is Presumption to expect them, in neglect of Duty; we must pray and wait for them.

3] We must *wait* on the Lord with earnest Desire; as poor benighted Souls, look out, wish and long for the Day-light. Psal. cxxx. 6. *My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the Morning: I say more than they that watch for the Morning.* So the Prophet expresses his Resolution, Isai. viii. 17. *I will wait on the Lord, that bideth his Face from the House of Jacob, and I will look for him; that is long, and wait, and hope for his Return.* So that waiting implies Humility, Patience, Expectation, Desire, Hope and Trust, Isai. l. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness, that is, under Doubts and Fears, and hath no Light, of Comfort? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*

4] We should *wait* on the Lord, as diseased Souls wait upon the Physician for Healing. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Physician and Healer of Souls. He hath his Eye-Salve for the Blind. Rev. iii. 18. *That is the Doctrines of the Gospel, which he brings*

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brings home to some; making the Light of
the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in
the Face of Jesus Christ, to shine into their
Hearts. And he has his Balm for the wound-
ed; such as are under deep Conviction of
Sin. Deut. xxxii. 39. *See now that I, even
I am he, and there is no God with me; I kill
and I make alive; I wound and I heal: nei-
ther is there any that can deliver out of my
Hand.* He can heal all spiritual Diseases,
Psal. ciii. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities,
who healeth all thy Diseases.* He is a most
wise and skilful; a most faithful and tender;
a most merciful and gracious; and a most
successful Physician: He never fails of Cure.
Whatever were their Diseases that apply'd to
him in the Days of his Ministry upon Earth,
they never failed of Cure; Luke vi. 19. *There
went Virtue out of him, and healed them all.*
And he is willing to undertake the Cure,
be the Disease what it will; and he does all
freely; *without Money and without Price.*

5] *WE should wait on the Lord, as Sub-
jects wait on the King. To see the King in
his Beauty and Glory. We should come to
Gospel-Ordinances, with this View. Psal.
xxvii. 4. One Thing have I desired of the
Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may
dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of
my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord,
and to enquire in his Temple—And our
waiting on the King, should be, to present
our Petition before him: for the King of
Israel*

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Israel has said, to poor, needy Sinners, what is thy Petition, and what is thy Request? Ask and it shall be given thee, even to the half of the Kingdom. Ask what you will, in the Name of Christ, and it shall be given you; *Ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.* Therefore before thou goest into the Presence of the King, sit down and consider, what thy Petition should be. Is it to obtain *the King's Mercy*; the free Pardon of thy great and many Sins; for thou hast been guilty of Rebellion and High Treason against the King of Heaven; Soul, what canst thou do less than fall down and confess thy Faults, and ask Pardon of Sin, as a Fruit of his free Grace? — Or would it not be to ask Help against thy powerful Enemies, Satan and his Temptations; that God, according to his own Promise, would give in Strength, according to the Day of Trial and Temptation? *Deut. xxxiii. 25.* — *As thy Days, so shall thy Strength be.* *Rom. xvi. 20.* *The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your Feet shortly.* *1 Cor. x. 13.* *There bath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the Temptation also, make a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Or would not thy Petition be, for Help against thy Corruptions; to have thine Iniquities subdued? For that's the gracious Promise of God, and most needful for thee. *Mich.*

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vii. 19. *He will turn again, he will have Compassion upon us: he will subdue our Iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their Sins into the Depths of the Sea.* What is there, among all the Afflictions of the People of God, that so much grieves the gracious Soul, as the Body of Sin? He that could glory in Tribulations, Rom. v. 3. groans under the Remains of the Body of Sin. Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? or this Body of Death.* Those that are not groaning and breathing for Deliverance, are not yet alive, but dead in Trespasses and Sins. Again, would not thy Errand to the King be, to put him in Mind of some gracious Promise, that he has made to thee or thine; and which he has encouraged thee to ask, and plead, and wait for? If the Promises are great, and good, and suitable, then they are worth the waiting for; and you have the King's royal Word for their Fulfilment, in the fittest Season, to encourage your Prayer and Hope in Waiting, none shall wait on him in vain; none ever were, nor ever shall be ashamed that wait for him. Only it is fit that we should wait his Time, which is always the fittest Time. *Hab. ii. 3. The Vision is yet for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak, and not lie: tho' it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Thus we learn what we are to wait upon the Lord for; it is for the Fruits of his ever-
lasting

lasting Love; for spiritual Profit under the Means of Grace; more Faith in the Son of God; more Love to the Lord Jesus Christ; more Hatred of Sin; more sensible Assistance in Duty; more remarkable Answers of Prayer, and Fulfilment of Promises; more spiritual Strength, both for Work and Trials; more Conformity to the Son of God; more spiritual Experience; more Joy and Peace in Believing. These are Mercies worth the waiting for.

[2. WE are also informed, *where* Men are to wait on the Lord, for these great and necessary Mercies. And that is, at the *Gates of the King*; at the *Posts of his Doors*; that is in his *Churches*; under his Ordinances; on the Means of Grace; where he has recorded his Name; where he has promised his Presence. Matt. xxviii. 30. *Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am, that is, I will be, with you alway, even unto the End of the World.* This Charge, and Appointment, therefore, reproves those, who, at their own Pleasure, neglect the Ordinances of Jesus Christ; as if it were in their Power to dispense with some of them; and might, or might not, attend on them, even as they themselves thought good. Neglecting one Ordinance, while they perform another, is no Evidence of Sincerity; nor Way to thrive in their Souls. And, at the same Time, such grieve their Fellow-Disciples; and they
stumble

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stumble the weak and expose them to Temptations; and give Satan Advantage, both against themselves and others.

[3] We have *the Season* which the personal Wisdom of God has fixed on for the Discharge of this necessary Duty. And that is *daily*. Not for once and no more, but *continually*. *Hos. xii. 6—Wait on thy God continually.* In hearty and chearful Compliance with every known Duty; in publick, private, and secret; with earnest Desire of *Growth in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—* But why must our whole Life be spent in waiting on the Lord; or waiting at the Gates of Wisdom? I answer, herein our Duty and Interest are sweetly joined together. I may therefore answer this Question, in a few Particulars which shall close our Text and present Subject.

1] We should wait daily on the Lord, because he who is our Sovereign Lord and Master commands it. Therefore it becomes our Duty, with which, none upon Earth has Power to dispense. We find this Duty inculcated, in other Portions of Scripture. *Psal. xxvii. 14. Wait on the Lord; be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart; wait I say on the Lord.* *Psal. xxxvii. 7. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*

2] It is but reasonable: for he waited long upon us, before we look'd after him
and

and his Grace ; even as he himself, has expressed it ; Cant. v. 2. *'Till his Head was wet with Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night.* O how did the Lord of Glory stand calling, knocking and waiting at the Door of our Hearts, before we opened the Door to him ! Besides, his infinite Wisdom is fittest to determine both what to give, and when to give suitable Mercies to his People : The Time that we set, and the Time that God sets, may not always come together ; but tho' God may not always come at our Time, yet God will always come at his own Time. It is very fit that the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, should set his own Time ; and it is as fit that we should submit to it : for that's always best, that infinite Wisdom does.

3] We should wait on the Lord, 'till the Mercy comes : for when it comes it will abundantly pay for all our waiting. The Greatness and exceeding Value, the Suitableness and durable Nature of the Mercy, will make Amends for all.

4] We should patiently wait on the Lord 'till the Mercy comes ; because no sincere Soul shall wait in vain. He may wait longer than he once expected he should have done, but he shall never be disappointed of his Hope. *Isai. xlix. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Isai. xxv. 9. It shall be said, in that Day, lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us, this*

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is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his Salvation.

5] We should wait the Lord's Time; because the very Delay of the Mercy waited for, may be for the greater Advantage and Comfort of the Soul in the End. Suppose it be for an Answer of Prayer, or the Fulfilment of a Promise, or for removing of an Affliction; the very Delay may be a Mercy. *Isai. xxx. 18. Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious to you; that is the more gracious; and therefore will he be exalted that he may have Mercy upon you; that is show the greater Mercy; for the Lord is a God of Judgment; that is, of infinite Wisdom, to know the best Way, and the fittest Time to give the Mercy desired; therefore it is added; Blessed are all they that wait for him; Lam. iii. 35. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeketh him; to such as continue to seek him, 'till his Time is come.*

6] WAITING on the Lord Jesus Christ is the Exercise of Grace, and the Exercise tends to its Increase; and that will turn to our own Profit. It is the Exercise of Faith, Patience and Hope. If it be waiting for a Promise; Faith regards it, as true, and that God is both able and faithful to perform. We must consider both these, while we wait for any Promise; or else we shall quickly have done waiting. So Abraham did; *Rom. iv. 21. He staggered not at the Promise of God thro' Unbelief; but was strong in Faith; giving Glo-*

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ry to God: And being fully persuaded that
what he had promised, he was able also to per-
form. And the Apostle takes in the other
Part; Heb. x. 23. *Let us hold fast the Pro-
fession of our Faith without wavering, for he
is faithful that promised.* So Hope regards
the same Promise, as it is good, or suitable;
both these considered together, encourage
the waiting. And waiting on the Lord is
the Exercise of Patience; or Contentment to
stay God's Time. Heb. x. 36. *Ye have need of
Patience, that after ye have done the Will of
God, ye may inherit the Promises.* There must
be a sincere Concern to do the Will of God;
for why shou'd Men expect the Reward,
without the Work; there must not only
be a doing of the Work of the Lord, but
there must be a patient Continuance in well-
doing; such only can regularly look for
Glory, Honour and a blessed Immortality
and eternal Life. And why should any look
for it without Holiness; for God has said it;
Heb. xii. 14. *Follow Peace with all Men,
and Holiness, without which no Man shall see
the Lord.* And as there must be patient Con-
tinuance in well-doing; so there must be a
patient waiting the Will of God, after we
have done his Will. A patient waiting for
Answers of Prayer, Psal. xl. 1. *I waited
patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me,
and heard my Cry.* Or for Fulfilment of
Promises; for there is a set Time for their
Fulfilment. Act. vii. 17. *When the Time of*
the

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the Promise drew nigh; that is for the Fulfilment of the Promise, which God had sworn to Abraham. Gal. iv. 4. When the Fullness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law. And so there should be a patient waiting for spiritual Profit, by, or for Removal of Afflictions; When the Gold is refined, the Fire of Afflictions shall go out, for God does not willingly correct, or grieve the Children of Men; but he doth it for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.

Thus I have endeavour'd, as with a Glass, to set in your View, the eternal Love and Delights of Jesus Christ with the Sons of Men; and have also shewn, how this Love of Christ exerts itself in Time: but what it may further produce, Eternity itself will be needful to unfold: for at present Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath entered into the Heart of Man, what God hath prepared, and laid up, for them that love him and wait for him. But surely as the Tree is, such will its Fruits be: that is, as the Love was eternal, and is that Love which passeth Knowledge; such will be its Fruits, that is unmeasurable. I have also shewn you, in some Measure, how the Report of these things, made to us thro' the Gospel, should be improved by us; that is, first to endeavour, with all Diligence, to clear up your own particular Interest in the everlasting Love

Love of Christ, by looking after its genuine Fruits upon your own Souls; as they have been described, in the foregoing Pages. And then, carefully endeavour to demonstrate to others, that you have, indeed, received the blessed Fruits of the everlasting Love of Christ; which is best proved by the Display of your sincere Love to Jesus Christ; every Grace of God in Truth, as it is a living Plant of God's own right Hand's planting in the Heart, will necessarily be productive of its suitable Fruits in Heart, Speech and Conversation. The Fear of God will ever put Men upon watching against Sin, and Temptation; *The Fear of the Lord is to depart from Evil*; it will ever make Men afraid to offend, and careful to please God. So the Grace of Faith in Jesus Christ will work by Love; that is to Christ himself, and to all that bear his Image, and Love to Holiness, with all the Means appointed to promote it. And sincere Love will be laborious, in Acts of chearful Obedience to God, and delightful Discharge of all known Duties, both towards God and Men. And the best Way to make out the eternal Love of Christ to us and his Delights in us; is by our sincere Love to him: And one of the best Proofs of our sincere Love to Jesus Christ, is the Bent and Disposition of the Soul to keep his Commandments. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* And the

the Grace of Hope will ever be attended with Humility, Patience and Holiness; you have all these Things exemplified in one Verse: 1 Thes. i. 3. *Remembering, without ceasing, your Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sight of God and our Father.*

O may we experience, more and more, the blessed Fruits of Christ's everlasting Love and Delights; and while we profess to wait and hope for the Perfection thereof, in an Eternity of Blessedness in Heaven, may we be careful to purify ourselves, even as he is pure, with whom we hope to live.

F I N I S.

N O 64



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